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AP

Russian and Syrian military gather with civilians next to an American military convoy stuck in the village of Khirbet Ammu, Syria, on Wednesday. Syrian media and activists say a Syrian was killed in a clash between American troops and government supporters.

Standoff in Syria

US troops return fire at pro-Assad fighters; regime claims 1 dead

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

American troops returned fire after being shot at by militiamen and civilians in northeastern Syria on Wednesday, the U.S. military said, in a fight that the Assad regime said left one civilian dead.

One civilian was also wounded after Syrians loyal to President Bashar Assad tried to block a convoy of several American vehicles at an army checkpoint near the town of Qamishli, state media and observers reported.

"After Coalition troops issued a series of warnings and de-escalation attempts, the patrol came

'After Coalition troops issued a series of warnings and de-escalation attempts, the patrol came under small arms fire.'

Col. Myles B. Caggins III
coalition spokesman

under small arms fire from unknown individuals," said Col. Myles B. Caggins III, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition that is aiding local Kurdish and Arab forces battling Islamic State.

The Americans defended themselves, Caggins said in a statement posted online. The statement did not say whether anyone was killed or injured, but a later statement said one American was slightly wounded and has returned to duty.

"The situation was de-escalated and is under investigation," Caggins said. "The Coalition patrol returned to base."

SEE SYRIA ON PAGE 7

Sanders edges past Buttigieg in NH vote

Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Bernie Sanders won New Hampshire's presidential primary, edging moderate rival Pete Buttigieg and scoring the first clear victory in the Democratic Party's chaotic 2020 nomination fight.

In his Tuesday night win, the 78-year-old Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, beat back a strong challenge from the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Ind. The dueling Democrats represent different generations, see divergent paths to the nomination and embrace conflicting visions of America's future.

As Sanders and Buttigieg celebrated, Amy Klobuchar scored an unexpected third-place finish that gives her a road out of New Hampshire as the primary season moves on to the string of state-by-state contests that lie ahead.

Elizabeth Warren and Joe Biden posted disappointing fourth and fifth place finishes, respectively, and were on track to finish with zero delegates from the state.

SEE PRIMARY ON PAGE 9



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVALS/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaks to supporters in Manchester, N.H., on Tuesday.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Judge OKs T-Mobile's Sprint deal; worries remain

By TALI ARBEL
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A federal judge has cleared a path for T-Mobile to buy Sprint for \$26.5 billion, citing T-Mobile's track record in promoting competition, even as legal scholars and consumer advocates warn about higher phone bills.

Judge Victor Marrero said he believed that the new T-Mobile would continue to compete with Verizon and AT&T, the industry giants whose size it now rivals.

T-Mobile has promised not to raise prices for three years and said that "efficiencies" it gets from a more powerful network will lead to lower prices down the road. T-Mobile also argued that the combined T-Mobile and Sprint could build a better next-generation, 5G cellular network than either company could alone.

But over a dozen state attorneys general had sued to block the deal, saying that one fewer phone company would cost Americans billions of dollars in higher bills. One

of the leading parties, New York Attorney General Letitia James, said that Tuesday's ruling "marks a loss for every American who relies on their cellphone."

Gigi Sohn, a former Federal Communications Commission adviser who is now a fellow at Georgetown's law school, said that while consumers are often promised benefits from mergers, "what they are left with each time are corporate behemoths" that can raise prices and destroy competition.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 13)	\$1.1193	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
Dollar buys (Feb. 13)	60.8934	British pound	\$1.2961
British pound (Feb. 13)	\$1.33	Canada (Dollar)	1.3253
Japanese yen (Feb. 13)	107.00	China (Yuan)	6.9690
South Korean won (Feb. 13)	1,151.00	Denmark (Krone)	6.8527
		Egypt (Pound)	15.1148
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.0904/0.9171
		Hungary (Forint)	7.7699
		Israel (Shekel)	3.1777
		Japan (Yen)	110.05
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3048
		Norway (Krone)	9.2081
		Philippines (Peso)	50.55
		Poland (Zloty)	3.90
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7509
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3859
		South Korea (Won)	1,179.24
		Switzerland (Franc)	0.9762
		Thailand (Baht)	31.09
		Turkey (Lira)	6.0444

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.25
Federal funds market rate	1.50
3-month bill	1.54
30-year bond	2.05

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE



FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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WAR

US, Taliban meet again

Trump gives conditional approval to sign peace deal

The Washington Post

American and Taliban negotiators were meeting Wednesday in Doha, Qatar, following a conditional decision from President Donald Trump to sign a peace deal with the militants, according to officials.

One U.S. official and an Afghan official briefed on the matter Wednesday said Trump gave his conditional approval to sign a peace deal with the Taliban if the insurgents can demonstrate their commitment to reducing violence in Afghanistan.

"Trump has endorsed the deal and said it must be signed," the Afghan official said, explaining that when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called Afghan leaders Tuesday, he said the peace talks "deadlock" had been broken.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

For months U.S. negotiators have demanded a reduction in violence from the Taliban before formal talks can resume. Taliban negotiators presented a violence reduction proposal in January that would have ceased attacks in cities and highways. But it was unclear how long it would last and if it would apply to the Afghan military as well as U.S. military personnel.

After weeks of back and forth, American and Taliban negotiators have reached an agreement on how exactly violence will be

reduced and for how long, according to the Afghan official. However he did not provide further details. People knowledgeable about the negotiations said the reduction would probably be seen to 10 days.

The State Department, in a statement, said "U.S. talks with the Taliban in Doha continue around the specifics of a reduction in violence."

Pompeo told Afghan leaders in phone calls Tuesday that "notable progress" had been made in the peace talks. Afghan government officials have previously said a cease-fire is a precondition to talks with the Taliban, but both Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah expressed optimism about a potential "reduction in violence," after their separate calls with Pompeo.

Both leaders however, indicated in statements on Twitter that no final agreement had been reached.

Reducing violence would be seen as an expression of good faith on the part of the Taliban. Once it was over, a more formal U.S.-Taliban agreement could be signed within days. The agreement would include the start of direct talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government next month, and the beginning of a U.S. troop withdrawal.

Abdullah tweeted that Pompeo had "expressed optimism that a reduction in



RAHMAT GUL/AP

National army soldiers stand guard after a suicide attack Tuesday near the military academy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

violence and progress with current talks could lead to an agreement that would pave the way for intra-Afghan talks leading to durable peace."

One person knowledgeable about the negotiations cautioned that it remains unclear what the status of any signed U.S.-Taliban agreement would be if violence resumed after the agreed reduction period, or if promised talks between the militants and the Afghan government did not succeed or even begin. This person spoke on the condition of anonymity.

In September, U.S. negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad announced that a tentative deal had been reached with the Taliban. Trump

said he planned to bring Taliban leaders to Camp David to sign it, but he called off the meeting - which the Taliban later said it had not agreed to - as well as further talks, after the militants took credit for an attack in Kabul that killed an American soldier.

The draft agreed to at the time included Taliban cooperation in fighting against terrorist groups in Afghanistan, such as the Islamic State, as well as U.S. withdrawal and inter-Afghan talks, with a nationwide cease-fire at the top of the agenda. Trump announced in November that the talks had restarted, but progress was reported to be limited until recently.

SIGAR: Measuring progress in Afghanistan is difficult

By STEVE BRYNEN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, told Congress on Tuesday that measuring progress on America's longest war is virtually impossible with even the most basic facts trapped behind an ever-expanding umbrella of secrecy.

"Every time we find something that looks like it's going negative, it gets classified ... Most of the [methods] of measuring success are now classified," he said in testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee.

Sopko said it is impossible to gauge whether the Afghanistan

government could keep order in its country if the U.S. military pulled out because the capabilities of Afghanistan's army and police force are unknown.

"One question we would like to ask the Afghans is how many people [they] control and how much territory, and that's now not relevant, apparently ... It's all secret, classified," he told the Senate panel. "\$64 billion has gone to training and assisting the Afghan military and I can't tell you or the American people [how capable they are], that's in part because we allow the Afghan government to classify what I can tell you and tell the taxpayer. How many Afghan soldiers do we have? We're still trying to figure out how many we're paying for. How many Af-

ghan police are there, really? We don't know."

In 2008, Congress created the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, known as SIGAR, to investigate fraud and waste in the war.

The ineffectiveness and pervasive corruption in Afghanistan's army and police long have been a top concern for U.S. military leaders. Sopko has been a bullhorn on Capitol Hill, raising the alarm of incompetence and bureaucratic failures from the U.S. and Afghan governments for the past 18 years of war, which has killed roughly 2,400 American troops, including two Green Berets who died last week in combat.

"The Afghan military — and

particularly the Afghan police — has been a hopeless nightmare and a disaster," Sopko said last week while testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

What the U.S. and the Afghanistan government end up classifying is an ever-ballooning list intended to cover up the failures of the war, according to Sopko.

"We have a list of everything that's classified and it keeps growing," he said Tuesday before the Senate panel. "The latest is looking at the Afghan special forces. It's great, we've put a lot of money in that. But looking at the number of independent missions the Afghan special forces are doing has gone down. I would bet you that next quarter, that database will be classified."

Tuesday's hearing was an effort by senators to follow up on the Afghanistan Papers, the Washington Post's reporting series based on hundreds of confidential interviews that SIGAR conducted with key figures of the nearly two-decade war that showed the projections of progress in Afghanistan were deliberately misleading despite overwhelming evidence the war had become an unwinnable quagmire.

"We cannot show any progress, we lost a trillion dollars, we lost thousands of lives," said Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo. "I just don't see what's going on here. I don't think anybody really knows what we're doing."

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Stoltenberg: NATO allies agree to expand mission Iraq

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. allies in Europe agreed Wednesday to expand their mission in Iraq, answering a demand by Defense Secretary Mark Esper that NATO members play a larger role in the fight against the Islamic State, the alliance's top official said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said allies decided in principle during a meeting of defense ministers in Brussels to boost efforts aimed at training Iraqi security forces. Esper was at NATO headquarters in Brus-

sels to press allies to expand operations in the Middle East, echoing President Donald Trump's recent call for NATO to do more in the region.

Esper, speaking ahead of the NATO meeting, said NATO doing more in Iraq means the United States could eventually reduce the number of forces it has in the country.

"That's my ambition, but the first thing is getting NATO in, and once we get NATO in, or more NATO partners in, we could look at reducing our footprint," Esper told reporters.

An expanded NATO mission

in Iraq would mean some U.S. troops could be returned to bases at home to focus on training or deploy to other regions such as the Pacific, where the Pentagon has said it wants to shift its focus to counter China and Russia, Esper said.

The United States has about 5,000 troops in Iraq to support operations against ISIS, while NATO's training mission in the country comprises some 500 members.

NATO suspended training operations in Iraq following the killing last month by a U.S. drone of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani,

but Stoltenberg said the alliance expected to resume training in the country "as soon as possible."

Stoltenberg did not specify how many more troops NATO members would send to Iraq or if forces would shift from the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS to the NATO campaign in the country.

"It's too early to say today," he said, adding details still need to be worked out.

Stoltenberg said Iraq ultimately would decide whether allies remain in the country to train local forces. In the wake of the U.S. airstrike against Soleimani in Baghdad, Iraq's political lead-

ers complained about a violation of the country's sovereignty and threatened to evict U.S. troops.

Meanwhile, Esper said he'd also like to see more NATO participation in deterring Iranian aggression in the region. More forces could be sent to Saudi Arabia to help with air defense there, he said.

Greater NATO involvement in the Middle East was expected to be high on the agenda of the NATO defense ministers' meetings, which run until Thursday.

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PACIFIC

US flies along Taiwan Strait after Chinese drills

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Air Force flew two B-52 bombers and an MC-130J Commando II tanker along the Taiwan Strait on Wednesday morning after Chinese naval and air forces flew over the island twice this week, Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said.

The aircraft flew north to south along the airspace over the Taiwan Strait and were "closely monitored," the defense ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

Air Force officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Wednesday.

The 110-mile-wide strait separates mainland China from Taiwan, which Beijing regards as its own.

The U.S. considers Taiwan's status unsettled, but adheres to the "One China" policy, acknowledging that Beijing considers Taiwan part of China. However, the Taiwan Relations Act provides a framework for the U.S. to aid the self-governing island's defense.

The flyer comes after China held back-to-back air drills near Taiwan this week.

On Sunday, China held a "combat-readiness patrol," sending bombers, jet fighters and early warning aircraft flying through the巴士 Channel and Miyako Strait, a Chinese Defense Ministry statement said Sunday. Several destroyers and frigates were also involved in the exercise.

"The Chinese military's combat-ready patrol is completely legitimate and is the necessary action taken to address the cur-

rent security situation across the Taiwan Strait and safeguard China's sovereignty," the Chinese Defense Ministry statement said.

On Monday, China held joint naval and air drills in the waters off the southeastern coast of Taiwan, including air-to-ground assault and fire support exercises, a Defense Ministry statement Tuesday said.

Chinese fighter jets during the Monday exercise crossed the "middle line" of the Taiwan Strait, edging closer to Taiwan than mainland China, a report by China's state-run newspaper Global Times said Tuesday.

Chinese military expert Song Zhongping told Global Times that the demonstrations "are not only warnings to Taiwan secessionists, but also demonstrations of PLA

capabilities to solve the Taiwan question by force."

Song added that the Chinese drills aimed to sharpen skills "useful in potential battles against Taiwan's military force," the Global Times report said.

China last made a "deep incursion" across the strait's middle line in 2019 but hadn't done so for 20 years prior to that, Bonnie Glaser, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in Washington last month.

The drills come one month after Tsai Ing-wen was reelected Taiwan's president on the promise of preserving the island's sovereignty, after Chinese leader Xi Jinping described unification as "inevitable."

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Group helps military journalists break into civilian news careers

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

When former Navy journalist Zack Baddorf went looking for similar work in the civilian sector, he expected his experience and veteran status would open doors.

"I built a portfolio and got my bachelor's. I thought it would translate well to the civilian work force," he said. "As it turned out, I was wrong; it was a tough transition."

Baddorf, who now works for the Department of Defense, and Russell Midori, a former Marine journalist, teamed up in May to form the nonprofit Military Veterans in Journalism. They aimed to help fellow former service members find work, but also increase the number of veterans working in the media.

Military Veterans in Journalism provides a network for vets as well as tips on finding civilian jobs, Baddorf said. More than 10 volunteers help run the organization.

"My co-founder, a former Marine, went through similar issues and we sat down and thought there had to be a better way, so we

decided to do this," he said.

Civilian newsrooms need former military journalists, Baddorf said. The United States has been at war nearly 20 years at a cost of more than 7,000 lives, about 50,000 wounded and billions in tax dollars. Veterans affairs — employment, health care and suicide, for example — create frequent headlines.

"Yet military veterans are vastly underrepresented in our nation's newsrooms," he said. U.S. Census data show that about 7% of Americans have served in the armed forces, but only 1.1% of media workers are post-9/11 military veterans, Baddorf said.

With an average salary of under \$35,000 a year for entry-level journalists, according to payscale.com, this is a career that's more about commitment than income.

After her stint as an aviation supply specialist in the Marine Corps, Babe Garcia obtained a degree in journalism from Montclair State University in New Jersey.

"I was inspired at a young age by broadcast journalism, so I



SAMUEL KEENAN/Massachusetts National Guard

Air Force Staff Sgt. Thomas Swanson films an exercise in Massachusetts in 2018. Military Veterans in Journalism, a nonprofit formed by veterans, helps former service members find work in the media.

knew early on that this was the career path I wanted to take," Garcia said Jan. 27 by phone to Stars and Stripes.

She contacted Baddorf last year and Military Veterans in Journalism raised money to send her college journalism team to the Edward R. Murrow Awards, where the team won a 2019 student award for excellence in video reporting.

"We won for a story we did in

Puerto Rico in 2018," Garcia said. "It was a great networking opportunity where I met David Begnaud, the lead national correspondent for CBS."

The team won for a half-hour report on the aftermath of 2017's Hurricane Maria. Garcia is now a volunteer with Baddorf's organization.

Military Veterans in Journalism will host its first workshop in April in New York, Baddorf said.

The event is designed for vets looking for a journalism career who have little or no experience in the field. The aim is to familiarize them with the tools of the trade and arrange for them to shadow working journalists.

The organization is also working to set up internships and scholarships for qualified veterans, Baddorf said.

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2 service members arrested on Okinawa in separate incidents

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An Army sergeant first class and a Marine corporal were picked up by Japanese police over the weekend in separate alcohol-related offenses.

A resident of the Miyagi section of Chatan town summoned police at 3:30 a.m. Sunday after hearing a commotion and catching sight of Sgt. 1st Class Jonathon Levi

Sweeney, 30, carrying away the resident's kayak, Okinawa Police deputy chief Hirotoishi Iha said Wednesday. The kayak was kept by the front door.

It was unclear Wednesday where Sweeney is stationed.

Police found him on the street with the kayak and arrested him, Iha said. He said Sweeney told the arresting officers that "it is OK to pick up things on the street in the U.S."

"The suspect said he does not remember stealing the kayak,"

Iha said.

Sweeney's blood alcohol content after his arrest measured 0.12%, four times Japan's legal limit for driving of 0.03%, Iha said.

Police on Monday referred a theft charge against Sweeney to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office, Iha said. He was released that day.

In an unrelated incident, Marine Cpl. Wilfredo De Jesus Romero, 20, assigned to Camp Hansen, was arrested in Kin town at 1:50 a.m. Saturday after

allegedly trespassing on the roof of an off-base home, police said Wednesday.

The owner of the two-story home heard noises coming from the roof, looked and found Romero, an Ishikawa Police deputy chief said. The homeowner called police. Some government officials in Japan customarily speak on condition of anonymity.

The police spokesman said Romero found his way to the roof via a flight of stairs outside the building.

Romero told police he wanted to "see the night view," the spokesman said. His blood alcohol content after his arrest measured 0.12%.

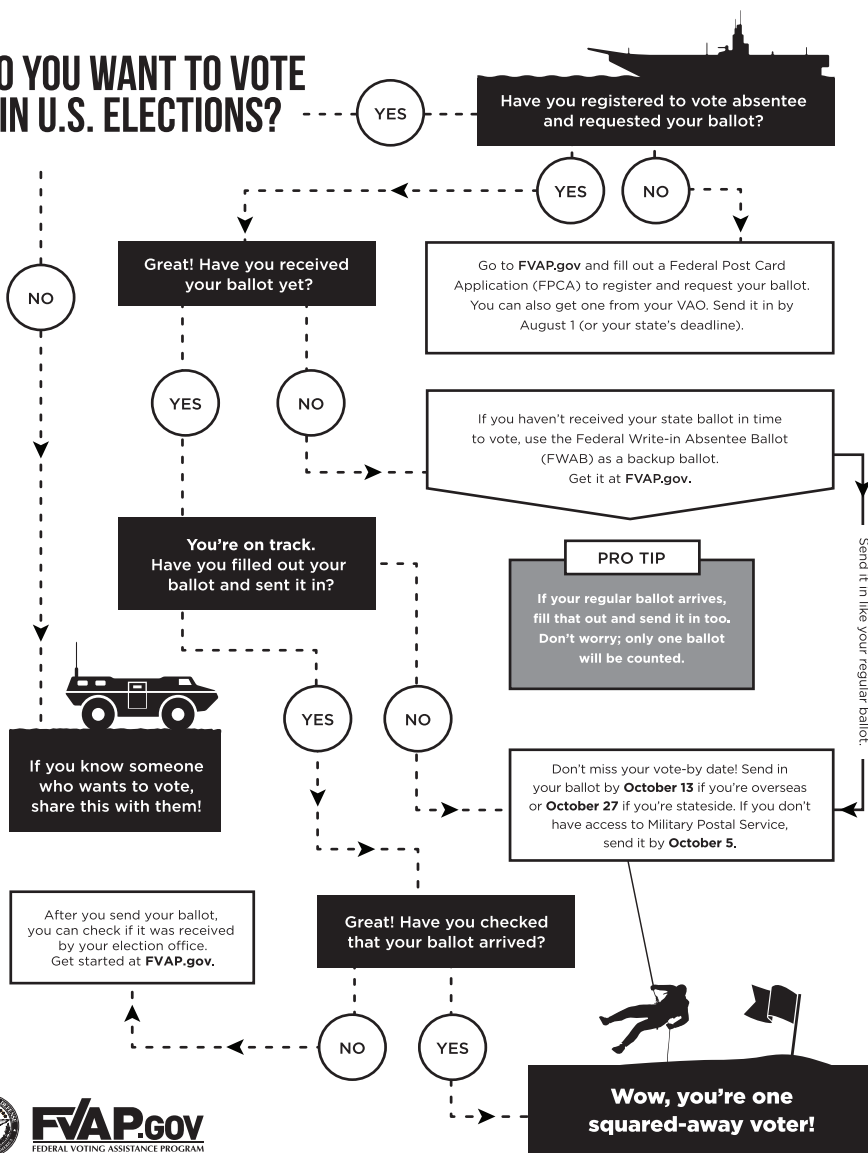
Police released Romero on Sunday and referred a trespassing charge against him to the Naha District Public Prosecutors Office the same day, the police spokesman said.

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So you're stationed overseas and it's an election year...

This handy flowchart on absentee voting lays it all out.

DO YOU WANT TO VOTE IN U.S. ELECTIONS?



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PACIFIC

China sees drop in new virus cases

Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Wednesday reported another drop in the number of new cases of a viral infection and 97 more deaths, pushing the total dead past 1,100 as postal services worldwide said delivery was being affected by the cancellation of many flights to China.

The National Health Commission said 2,015 new cases had been reported over the last 24 hours, declining for a second day. The total number of cases in mainland China reached 44,653, although many experts say a large number of others infected have gone uncounted.

The additional deaths raised the mainland toll to 1,113. Two people have died elsewhere, one in Hong Kong and one in the Philippines.

In the port city of Tianjin, just south of Beijing, a cluster of cases has been traced to a department store in Baodi district. One-third of Tianjin's 104 confirmed cases in Baodi, the Xinhua state news agency reported.

A salesperson working in the store's small home appliance section became the first individual in the cluster to be diagnosed on Jan. 31, Xinhua said. The store was already closed at that point,

then disinfected on Feb. 1. Nevertheless, several more diagnoses soon followed.

The next to have their infections confirmed were also salespeople at the store. They had visited Wuhan recently and, with the exception of one married couple, the patients worked in different sections of the store and did not know one another, according to Xinhua.

Japan's Health Ministry said that 39 new cases have been confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at Yokohama, bringing the total to 174 on the Diamond Princess.

And in Singapore, the bank DBS on Wednesday cleared a downtown office and told some 300 employees to work from home after one of its staff was infected with the virus.

"We are also currently conducting detailed contact tracing with all employees and other parties that the infected person may have come into contact with," DBS said.

The U.S. Postal Service said that it was "experiencing significant difficulties" in dispatching letters, parcels and express mail to China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

Both the U.S. and Singapore Post said in notes to their global



CHINATOPX/AP

A doctor takes a swab from a woman to test for the COVID-19 virus at a fever clinic in eastern China's Shandong province on Wednesday.

counterparts that they are no longer accepting items destined for China, "until sufficient transport capacity becomes available."

The Chinese mail service, China Post, said it was disinfecting postal offices, processing centers and vehicles to ensure the virus doesn't spread via the mail and to protect staff.

It said the crisis is also impacting mail that transits China to other destinations including North Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

The World Health Organization has named the disease caused by the virus as COVID-19, avoiding any animal or geographic designation to avoid stigmatization and to show the illness comes from a

new coronavirus discovered in 2019.

The illness was first reported in December and connected to a food market in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the outbreak has largely been concentrated.

Zhong Nanshan, a leading Chinese epidemiologist, said that while the virus outbreak in China may peak this month, the situation at the center of the crisis remains more challenging.

"We still need more time of hard working in Wuhan," he said, describing the isolation of infected patients there a priority.

"We have to stop more people from being infected," he said. "The problem of human-to-human transmission has not yet been resolved."

2 Russians flee virus quarantine at hospital

Associated Press

MOSCOW — One patient jumped out of a hospital window to escape her quarantine and another managed to break out by disabling an electronic lock.

Two Russian women who were kept in isolation for possible infection by a new virus say they fled from their hospitals this month because of uncooperative doctors, poor conditions and fear they would be caught infected. Russian health authorities haven't commented on their complaints.

The incidents occurred amid the outbreak of the virus in China that has already infected more than 40,000 people worldwide. In Russia, only two cases of COVID-19 have been reported. Nevertheless, the authorities took vast measures to prevent the new disease from spreading and hospitalized hundreds of people who returned from China as a precaution.

Many of those quarantined in different Russian hospitals complained about dire conditions of isolation rooms and lack of cooperation from doctors, uncertain about quarantine protocols.

Both women said their hospital ordeals began after returning from Hainan, a tropical region of China popular with Russian tourists.

S. Korea to reduce troop numbers for Cobra Gold

By KIM GAMEL and YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea tentatively plans to sharply reduce the number of troops sent to Thailand for Asia's largest multinational military exercise due to fears about the spread of the deadly new coronavirus, its navy said Wednesday.

Seoul originally planned to ship about 400 service members along with eight amphibious assault vehicles to participate in Cobra Gold, a nearly two-week exercise that begins Feb. 24.

Instead, only about 30 senior-level troops are expected to travel to Thailand for the

simulated command post exercise. The South will likely follow the usual field maneuvers, the navy said in a statement, adding a final decision will be made this week.

"We changed the plan for the safety of our sailors," a South Korean navy official said.

The decision comes as South Korea steps up efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, a pneumonia-like disease that has killed more than 1,000 people in China and sickened tens of thousands in several other countries. South Korea has confirmed 28 cases, while Thailand has 33. No deaths have been reported in either country.

The World Health Organization has declared

it a global health emergency and renamed the virus, which appeared in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan, COVID-19.

Cobra Gold, co-sponsored by Thailand and the United States, began in 1982. Nearly 30 other nations attended the exercise last year for activities including military training, disaster-relief planning and relationship building.

Some 4,000 Americans will participate in the drills this year, according to Thai media.

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Japan confirms 39 new virus cases, 174 total on ship

Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan's health ministry said Wednesday that 39 new cases of a virus have been confirmed on a cruise ship quarantined at a Japanese port.

The update brings the total found on the Diamond Princess to 174 cases.

The ministry also said the virus was confirmed in a official who participated in the initial quarantine checks the night the ship returned to Yokohama Port near Tokyo on Feb. 3. The quarantine official is being treated in a hospital.

The new cases bring Japan's total to 203 people with the new disease, COVID-19.

The night of the ship's arrival, Japanese health officials began medical checks on all of the ship's 3,700 passengers and crew after one previous passenger tested positive for the virus.

The U.S.-operated Diamond Princess had completed a 14-day tour during which it stopped at Hong Kong and several other Asian ports before returning to Japan. An 80-year-old man who disembarked in Hong Kong tested positive for the virus, prompting Hong Kong to notify the ship and Japanese authorities, who then ordered the quarantine and testing.

Concerns over the virus have rerouted and canceled other

cruises. The Westerdam cruise ship carrying 2,257 passengers and crew is now in the Gulf of Thailand with nowhere to dock after being refused entry

in Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand. There are no confirmed cases of the virus on board, but it stopped in Hong Kong less than two weeks ago.



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MILITARY

Syria: Group says US forces discharged 'smoke bombs' before opening fire

FROM FRONT PAGE

The U.S. patrol was "besieged" by a crowd of both civilians and armed militiamen who "fired in the air," the London-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported, citing local sources. The Observatory maintains a network of activists on the ground.

After the U.S. forces fired "smoke bombs," they opened fire, the Observatory said, but it was unclear whether the person killed was a civilian or militia member.

U.S. jets ripped through the air above the villages after the incident, the Observatory reported. Photos and videos circulated on social media show an F-15 fighter jet firing a flare over the area.

The man killed was a civilian from Khirbet Ammu village, Syria's state-run SANA news agency said. Four American vehicles were damaged, it said, and five more were sent as reinforcements.

A cellphone video from the scene shows American troops standing outside several Oshkosh M-ATVs on a rural road and beside a concrete building. The video was posted to Twitter by Syrian Kurdish journalist Kamiran Sadoun, who said regime supporters attacked first.

A second video, posted to Twitter by journalist Mohammed Hassan, shows the same area, where Hassan says one U.S. vehicle was "destroyed." Syrian and Russian forces and "a lot of civilians" gathered, and the Syrian checkpoint was emptied, he reported. Hassan later tweeted photos of an F-15 fighter jet firing a flare over the area.

A Russian convoy arrived on the scene, apparently to defuse tensions, the Observatory reported. Moscow backs Assad in Syria's civil war, now in its ninth year.

The U.S. and Russia have for years worked to deconflict their operations in the country, but a top American diplomat has

warned of increased complexity in northeastern Syria, where U.S. troops are deployed and have had "minor dustups" with Russian patrols. The Americans occupy austere outposts in the provinces of Hassekah, where Wednesday's incident took place, and Deir al-Zour, and where Turkey has also entered the fray.

U.S. troops withdrew from northern Syria in October, ahead of a Turkish incursion to fight Kurdish forces that Ankara views as terrorists. Turkey backs rebel forces in the country but also conducts joint patrols with Russia.

The situation has led to "much more detailed ground deconfliction rules" along the road network, Ambassador James Jeffrey, the U.S. envoy to the anti-ISIS coalition, told reporters in January. Qamishli is where all those roads converge, Jeffrey said, and "there is a lot of patrolling there," a small number of which have led to the "dustups."

"Nothing serious, nothing particularly threatening," he said.

In a small but increasing number of occasions the Russians and Syrian regime forces have tried to come "deep into the areas" where the U.S. and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces patrol, he said in a later briefing.

Wednesday's incident could lead to increased tensions in the area. Other cellphone video showed men in civilian attire firing on the U.S. convoy with Kalashnikovs. The video was posted to a channel on the online app Telegram run by Syria's Radio and Television General Authority.

As several vehicles flying American flags attempted to pass through the area around Qamishli, locals pelted them with stones and blocked their way. Some people mounted the vehicles and ripped down a flag, SANA also reported.

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland



In this frame grab from video, people and soldiers gather next to an American military convoy stuck in the village of Khirbet Ammu, east of Qamishli city, Syria, on Wednesday. U.S. troops returned fire after being shot at in northeastern Syria.

Boosted by US, Turkish president vows to expel Syrian army from Idlib

BY SELCAN HACAOGLU
AND FIRAT KOZOK
Bloomberg

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed to drive Russian-backed Syrian government forces from the last rebel stronghold of Idlib, escalating his threats against Damascus after being buoyed by rare public support from the U.S.

Erdogan has massed tanks and commandos in Idlib after at least 14 Turks, most of them soldiers, were killed by forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, and on Wednesday threatened to hit Syrian targets "anywhere" if Turkish troops are harmed again.

"We're determined to drive away regime forces until the end of February" from the vicinity of Idlib, he said. At least three Turkish army outposts have been cut off in the area.

Assad's attempt to crush Turkish-backed rebels and al-Qaida

militants in the final major opposition holdout after nine years of war has triggered fierce Turkish military retaliation, while testing key strategic alliances.

Turkey and Russia have maintained an uneasy partnership in Syria, where they back opposing sides, but disagreements over who should control Idlib are taking a toll on the relationship. On Wednesday, Russia directly accused Turkey of failing to abide by agreements meant to contain hostilities in Idlib, warning that the situation was being aggravated by the flow of Turkish troops into the province.

Walking a fine line, Erdogan has been careful not to alienate Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is backing Assad. The two spoke by phone Wednesday about the "aggravation of the situation" in Idlib.

Erdogan said he and Putin decided that military and civilian officials from both sides would

hold further discussions.

Erdogan said he might soon talk with President Donald Trump on events in Syria after Ankara secured support from a visiting U.S. official in its tussle with the Assad regime.

James Jeffrey, the U.S. envoy for Syria engagement and its special representative to the global coalition to defeat Islamic State, said he had traveled to Turkey to discuss whatever support the country needed to defend its soldiers against "a threat in Idlib from Russia and the Assad government."

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MILITARY

Military downgrades efforts against Sahel extremists

Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG — The U.S. military has switched from trying to degrade Islamic extremist groups in West Africa's sprawling Sahel region to merely trying to contain them as their deadly threat increases, a new U.S. government report says.

The quarterly report by the inspectors general for the Pentagon, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development released this week is the first to be unclassified as interest surges in the U.S. military's activities in Africa.

Top concerns in Africa include the fast-growing threat from multiple extremist groups in the Sahel region just south of the Sahara Desert and the enduring threat by the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab in Somalia, which killed three Americans in an unprecedented attack against U.S. forces in Kenya last month.

Consistent pressure on extremist groups is needed to weaken them, the report says, citing Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who

has compared it to "mowing the lawn." That need, along with the often slow development of local partners' militaries, "could require ongoing commitment of U.S. military resources," the report adds.

The new report also says that the U.S. Africa Command has expressed concerns to the Pentagon's inspector general that some resources will be moved from Somalia to the North African nation of Libya, where a conflict between rival governments has drawn the attention of powers including Russia and Turkey.

About 6,000 U.S. military personnel are deployed across Africa, the report says, including 500 special operations forces in Somalia and about 800 personnel in West Africa.

The security situation in Burkina Faso "is deteriorating faster than anywhere else in the Sahel," says the new report, citing AFRICOM. The West African nation is staggering under a growing number of extremist attacks, as fighters move in from neighboring Mali. Hundreds of civilians

have been killed and hundreds of thousands have fled.

Extremist groups linked to the Islamic State group and al-Qaida in West Africa "are neither degraded nor contained," the new report warns, citing AFRICOM.

The new U.S. military strategy has changed from trying to degrade, or reduce the effectiveness, of those extremist groups in the Sahel to trying to keep them from growing their membership and spreading into new areas, AFRICOM told the Pentagon inspector general in the quarter ending Dec. 31.

Mali's president this week told French media outlets his government is now in contact with leaders of the most active extremist group, the al-Qaida-linked JNIM, a sign that troubled West African countries are exploring various options, including negotiations, to curb the threat.

JNIM has about 1,000 to 2,000 fighters, and its goal is to "unite all terrorist groups in the Sahel and eliminate Western influence in the region," the new U.S. report says.

Trump wants Pentagon to review conduct of impeachment witness

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump suggested Tuesday that the Pentagon should review the conduct of a former White House national security aide who played a central role in the Democrats' impeachment case and potentially consider disciplinary action against him.

Army Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who, until last week, was detailed by the Pentagon to the White House, testified before the House impeachment panel that Trump inappropriately pushed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter.

Vindman was ousted from his job on the White House National Security Council on Friday, just two days after the Senate acquitted Trump on abuse of power and obstruction of justice charges. He is to be reassigned by the Pentagon. His twin brother, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Vindman, who worked as an ethics lawyer at the NSC, was also ousted from his job and was re-assigned to the Army General Counsel's Office.

Trump has already been sharply criticized for pushing out Alexander Vindman and others who crossed him in the impeachment hearings.

Asked whether he wanted to see Vindman face discipline, Trump said that military officials "can handle him any way they want," but also suggested that he expected commanders to review the decorated, 20-year officer's conduct.

"That's going to be up to the military," Trump said. "We'll have to see. They are certainly, I imagine, going to take a look at that."

Robert O'Brien, Trump's national security adviser, said later Tuesday that Alexander Vindman was not asked to leave his White House job in retaliation for his testimony in the Democrats' impeachment case.

"There's absolutely no retaliation with respect to the Vindmans as far as impeachment goes," O'Brien said at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council. "But the president is entitled to a staff that he has confidence in and that he believes will execute his policy."

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THE NEW SANNO

NATION

Primary: Sanders, Buttigieg solid, Klobuchar a surprising 3rd in Granite State

FROM FRONT PAGE

The New Hampshire vote gives new clarity to a Democratic contest shaping up to be a battle between two men separated by four decades in age and clashing political ideologies. Sanders is a leading progressive voice, having spent decades demanding substantial government intervention in health care and other sectors of the economy. Buttigieg has pressed for more incremental change, preferring to give Americans the option of retaining their private health insurance while appealing to Republicans and independents who may be dissatisfied with President Donald Trump.

Their disparate temperaments were on display Tuesday as they spoke before cheering supporters.

"We are gonna win because we have the agenda that speaks to the needs of working people across this country," Sanders declared. "This victory here is the beginning of the end for Donald Trump."

Buttigieg struck an optimistic tone: "Thanks to you, a campaign that some said shouldn't be here at all has shown that we are here to stay."

Both men have strength heading into the next phase of the campaign, yet they face very different political challenges.

While Warren made clear she will remain in the race, Sanders, well-financed and with an ardent army of supporters, has cemented his status as the clear leader of the progressive wing of the party.

Meanwhile, Buttigieg must prove he can attract support from voters of color who are critical to winning the nomination.



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

Former South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg speaks to supporters in Nashua, N.H., after his second-place finish in Tuesday's Democratic primary.

And unlike Sanders, he still has multiple rivals in his own ideological wing of the party to contend with. They include Klobuchar, whose standout debate performance led to a late surge in New Hampshire and a growing national following. While deeply wounded, Biden promises strength in upcoming South Carolina. And though former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg was not on Tuesday's ballot, he looms next month when the contest reaches states offering hundreds of delegates.

After a chaotic beginning to primary voting last week in Iowa, Democrats hoped New Hampshire would help give shape to their urgent quest to pick someone to take on Trump in November. At least three candidates dropped out in the wake of weak finishes Tuesday night: moderate Colorado



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., shown speaking in Concord, N.H., on Tuesday night, finished third in New Hampshire, and was allocated six delegates.

Sen. Michael Bennet, former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick and political newcomer Andrew Yang, who attracted a small but loyal following over the past year.

The struggling candidates still in the race sought to minimize the latest results.

Warren, who spent months as a Democratic front-runner, offered an optimistic outlook as she faced cheering supporters: "Our campaign is built for the long haul, and we are just getting started."

Having already predicted he would "take a hit" in New Hampshire after a distant fourth-place finish in Iowa, Biden essentially ceded the state. He traveled to South Carolina on Tuesday as he bet his candidacy on a strong showing there later this month boosted by support from black voters.

Still, history suggests that the first-in-the-nation primary will have enormous influence shaping the 2020 race. In the modern era, no Democrat has ever become the party's general election nominee without finishing first or second in New Hampshire.

Sanders and Buttigieg were on track to win the same number of New Hampshire delegates with most of the vote tallied, with Klobuchar a few behind. Warren, Biden and the rest of the field were shut out, failing to reach the 15% threshold needed for delegates.

The AP allocated nine delegates each to Sanders and Buttigieg and six to Klobuchar.

The action was on the Democratic side, but Trump easily won New Hampshire's Republican primary. He was facing token opposition from former Massachusetts Gov. Bill Weld.

With most of the vote in, Trump already had amassed more votes in the New Hampshire primary than any incumbent president in history. His vote share was approaching the modern historical high for an incumbent president, 86.43% set by Ronald Reagan in 1984. Weld received about 9% of the vote of New Hampshire Republicans.

The political spotlight quickly shifts to Nevada, where Democrats will hold caucuses on Feb. 22. But several candidates, including Warren and Sanders, plan to visit other states in the coming days that vote on Super Tuesday, signaling they are in the race for the long haul.

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NATION

Trial team quits Stone case over sentence dispute

By MICHAEL BALSAMO
AND ERIC LUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The four lawyers who prosecuted Roger Stone quit the case after the Justice Department overruled them and said it would take the extraordinary step of lowering the amount of prison time it would seek for President Donald Trump's longtime ally and confidant.

The departures on Tuesday raised immediate questions over whether Trump, who earlier in the day had blasted the original sentencing recommendation as "very horrible and unfair," had at least indirectly exerted his will on a Justice Department that he often views as an arm of the White House.

The department insisted the decision to undo the sentencing recommendation was made Monday night — before Trump's tweet — and prosecutors had not spoken to the White House about it. Even so, the departures of the entire trial team broke open a simmering dispute over the punishment of a Trump ally whose case has long captured the Republican president's attention.

The four attorneys — Aaron Zelinsky and Adam Led, who were early members of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia team, Michael Marando and Jonathan Kravis — comprised the entire Justice Department trial team that won convictions against Stone last fall. Each had signed onto a Monday sentencing memo that recommended between seven and nine years in prison for Stone, who was convicted of lying to Congress, witness tampering and obstructing the House investigation into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia to tip the 2016 election. None lent their names to a Tuesday memo that called the original

recommendation excessive.

The departures leave in limbo the resolution of a case that was one of the signature prosecutions of Mueller's team and that cut to the heart of his mission — to determine whether the Trump team had access to nonpublic information about Democratic emails hacked by Russian operatives and provided to WikiLeaks.

Trump was back on the attack late Tuesday, slamming the original sentencing recommendation and questioning the judge overseeing the Stone case. And by early Wednesday, he had tweeted a congratulations to Attorney General William Barr "for taking charge of a case that was totally out of control and perhaps should not have been brought," suggesting the prosecutors had gone rogue.

It's unclear what sentence the department will ultimately seek — a new sentencing memo filed Tuesday evening indicated that the original recommendation was too harsh but proposed no specific punishment of its own.

A Justice Department official said authorities decided to step in and seek a shorter sentence because they had been taken by surprise by the initial recommendation. The person, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said prosecutors had told the department to expect a recommendation for a shorter sentence.

The day of upheaval began with a morning tweet from Trump that the Stone case was a "miscarriage of justice." He later told reporters he didn't speak to Justice Department officials, though he said he could if he wanted.



DAVID BATALTY, MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY/AP

Officials monitor a potential dam/levee failure in Yazoo County, Miss., on Tuesday.

Hill collapses, roads flooded, dam eroded by rain in South

Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A Tennessee hillside collapsed, roads were flooded and rivers were rising across the Southeast on Tuesday after a day of heavy rains that once again threatened a Mississippi lake where a dam previously was in danger of failing.

The National Weather Service said minor to moderate flooding was expected from central Mississippi to north Georgia following downpours. The Tennessee River was predicted to crest about 7 feet above flood level at Perryville, Tenn., on Sunday.

Near Great Smoky Mountains National Park in eastern Tennessee, tons of rock and soil slid off a 70-foot hillside and blocked the northbound side of a U.S. 441 spur linking the tourist towns of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, the National Park Service said.

At least 45 dump truck loads will be required to clear the road, officials estimated, but no injuries

were reported.

Multiple roads were covered with water or washed out because of rainfall that exceeded 5 inches in spots across central Alabama, and forecasters said totals could reach 6 inches by nightfall.

Schools opened late or closed in parts of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana because of flash flooding. A flood watch stretched from eastern Texas to Mississippi, and parts of Alabama were under flood warnings.

North of Birmingham in Cullman, the sheriff's office said Deputy Adam Clark and his police dog were badly injured in a wreck during heavy rains overnight. The cause of the crash was under investigation.

In eastern Mississippi, officials in Starkville said the water at Oktibbeha County Lake had once again reached a critical level just weeks after heavy rains caused a mudslide that put the earthen dam in danger of failing.

Pumps had been used to lower the lake level by about 8 feet since mid-January, but officials said the water had risen to an even higher mark than before because of recent storms.

"It has risen over 8.5 feet from our low elevation during pumping and continues to rise," said a statement by Kristen Campanella, emergency management director in Oktibbeha County.

Officials also were monitoring the site of a potential dam failure in Yazoo County, where the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said a 40-acre lake in a subdivision was leaking around a culvert and washing away dirt, threatening four homes and a church. Five homes were evacuated after a levee breach in Leake.

The Tennessee Valley region has received 550% of its normal rainfall in the past seven days, James Everett, senior manager of the Tennessee Valley Authority's River Forecast Center, said.

Feds: Ex-convict extorted college students for nearly \$1M

Associated Press

NEW YORK — An ex-convict accused of bilking several college students out of nearly \$1 million and forcing some into prostitution or unpaid labor was arrested Tuesday on extortion and sex trafficking charges.

Lawrence "Larry" Ray was previously known for his role in helping to send former New York City police commissioner Bernard Kerik, who was a close confidant of Rudy Giuliani, to prison.



Ray

college, a private liberal arts college

Federal prosecutors said Ray, 60, used "physical, sexual and psychological abuse" to extort money from five different students at Sarah Lawrence College, a private liberal arts college

outside New York City. He convinced them they were indebted to him, authorities said, subjecting them to "grueling interrogations" that spanned hours and deprived them of food and sleep.

Ray was taken into custody Tuesday. He has denied the allegations, saying they were the result of a conspiracy against him.

U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman told reporters the investigation was prompted by an article that appeared last year in New York magazine.

Ray allegedly ensnared many of his victims while they were sophomores at Sarah Lawrence. His first victims were his daughters' roommates, Berman said.

Ray moved into the students' on-campus housing in late 2010, and presented himself as a father figure to the roommates, according to an indictment filed in U.S. District Court.

Prosecutors allege that Ray directed the students to drain money from their parents' savings accounts and forced some of

them into unpaid labor at a family member's property in North Carolina. Others opened lines of credit or solicited contributions from others to help pay the false debts.

"Ray subjected his victims to almost unspeakable abuse," Berman said, alleging Ray once tied a woman to a chair and placed a plastic bag over her head that nearly suffocated her. Ray collected more than \$500,000 from that woman after forcing her into prostitution, prosecutors said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Schools addresses Nazi flag seen in window

MD FREDERICK — Officials for a public school in Maryland are investigating after a Nazi flag was pictured hanging in a classroom window.

Witnesses saw the flag while attending a basketball game at Governor Thomas Johnson High School in Frederick and photos of it quickly spread online, news outlets reported.

The Nazi flag was used in a World War II history class and left hanging in the window, visible to the outside, Frederick County Public Schools superintendent Theresa R. Alban said in a statement obtained by news outlets.

Alban said officials will "take appropriate action" to figure out what led up to the flag being hung there.

Man wins big lottery prize for a second time

NC MORGANTON — Lottery luck has smiled on a North Carolina man for the second time in seven years.

Donald Hildebran won \$250,000 after buying four 20X The Cash scratch-off tickets at a convenience store in Morganton, the North Carolina Education Lottery said in a news release.

It wasn't the first time Hildebran has hit it big in the lottery. In 2013, he won \$200,000 in the Extreme Cash game.

Hildebran, a retiree from Connelly Springs, told lottery officials he spent some of his first prize on a beach trip and plans to do the same with his new prize.

"I'm going fishing," he told lottery officials. "I'm going to the beach!"

Woman accused of stalking former boss

FL WEST PALM BEACH — A 45-year-old Florida woman is accused of stalking and harassing her former boss in an effort to get her job back, police said.

Brydiga Trzaska was arrested on charges of harassing phone calls and stalking, West Palm Beach police said.

After being fired in February 2019 following a dispute over vacation time and sick leave, Trzaska made multiple phone calls to her former boss, sent emails and even waited outside the victim's home for a chance to speak to her, the Palm Beach Post reported.

Police said the victim received several emails from Trzaska between February and June, wanting to address the termination.

Investigators found that Trzaska called the victim 339 times between Dec. 14 and Jan. 28.

Massive firework shot breaks world record

CO STEAMBOAT SPRINGS — A massive firework launched over a Colorado ski resort town has set a record for the world's largest aerial firework.

The 2,800-pound shell flew



JOE MAHONEY, RICHMOND (Va.) TIMES-DISPATCH/AP

Just around the river bend

Adam Tremper "surfs" the Fish Ladders under the T. Tyler Potterfield Bridge while kayaking the James River with friends Sunday in Richmond, Va. After heavy rains earlier in the week, the river crested about 2 a.m. on Sunday at 13.53 feet.

2,200 feet above the Steamboat Springs Winter Carnival before it burst, turning the sky bright red and drawing gasps from the crowd, The Steamboat Pilot & Today reported.

Tim Borden of Steamboat Springs headed the team that developed the firework over seven years. Borden first attempted to set the world record last year, but failed when the shell exploded inside the mortar, the newspaper reported.

Neighbors try to stop mauling by pack of dogs

FL SPRINGHILL — Neighbors used sticks, pieces of a gutter and a lawn chair in an attempt to stop a pack of dogs from mauling a Florida woman, who was critically injured in the attack that lasted at least five minutes, authorities said.

The attack only stopped when firefighters arrived at the home in Spring Hill and used their equipment to disperse the dogs, the Hernando County Sheriff's Office said in a news release.

The woman, who wasn't identified, was in critical condition at a hospital.

The woman was in her backyard with her small dog when four or five dogs in a neighboring house saw them through a sliding glass door that wasn't properly closed, authorities said. The neighbor's dogs escaped from the house and attacked them.

THE CENSUS

\$80K

The worth of Rolex watches stolen by two men Connecticut police are looking for. Stamford Police Capt. Richard Conklin said the two men broke into a Lord & Taylor store Thursday, began smashing a glass-topped case of high-end watches and took eight to 10 of the luxury brand watches before fleeing. "It looks like the two parties involved entered the store earlier, probably in an effort to case the location, about an hour and one-half prior to this action they took. They knew right where they were going and were out of the store very quickly," Conklin said.

K9 finds 220 pounds of pot in 2 traffic stops

MO COLUMBIA — The Missouri State Highway Patrol asked "Who's a good boy?" in a tweet after one of its dogs sniffed out about 220 pounds of marijuana during two Interstate 70 traffic stops.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that Rony's expert nose landed a Georgia man and two people from Virginia behind bars after they were caught with the drugs while traveling through Cooper County in central Missouri.

Rancher pleads guilty to poisoning 6 bald eagles

ND BISMARCK — A South Dakota rancher has pleaded guilty to federal charges in the deaths of six protected bald eagles who were poisoned by some misapplied pesticide on his property.

David Meyer, 58, supervised

the misapplication of 39,000 pounds of the pesticide Rozol on 5,400 acres of land on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in Corson County, according to prosecutors.

More than a dozen workers told investigators in 2016 that they were supposed to put the poison into prairie dog holes but got sloppy and put it near the holes.

Six bald eagles died after ingesting the poison, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Muddy rockslide closes highway after heavy rain

NC TOPTON — A North Carolina highway was closed while crews cleared debris from a rockslide that may have been triggered by heavy rain.

Removal of mud and debris from the slide began on U.S. Highway 19/74 in the Nantahala Gorge, the North Carolina De-

partment of Transportation said in a news release.

The location of the cleanup was near Hewitts Road, which NCDOT said was a "troublesome location" that closed the highway a month ago because of a landslide.

The area experienced excessive rain and flooded streams leading to road closures, news outlets reported.

3 charged with theft from youth program

TN MADISONVILLE — Three people have been charged with stealing \$30,000 from a youth clay target shooting program in Tennessee, authorities said.

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation agents began investigating theft of money from the 4-H Scholastic Clay Target Program in Monroe County in December 2015, the state police agency said in a news release.

During the investigation, agents found that Mary Ellen Sellin, Timothy Scott Sellin, and Tony Aram Millsaps stole about \$30,000 from the program over several years, the TBI said.

Mary Ellen Sellin handled funds for the organization, while Timothy Sellin and Millsaps served as coaches for the program, the TBI said.

All three turned themselves in to authorities on the theft charges this week.

From wire reports

NATION

Teachers unions: Active shooter drills scare kids

By PAT EATON-ROBB
Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — The nation's two largest teachers unions want schools to revise or eliminate active shooter drills, asserting Tuesday that they can harm students' mental health and that there are better ways to prepare for the possibility of a school shooting.

The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association joined with the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund in calling for an end to unannounced drills or drills that simulate gun violence.

"Everywhere I travel, I hear from parents and educators about active shooter drills terrifying students, leaving them unable to concentrate in the classroom and unable to sleep at night," said Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association. "So traumatizing students as we work to keep students safe from gun violence is not the answer. That is why if schools are going to do drills, they need to take steps to ensure the drills do more good than harm."

The report released Tuesday recommends that schools concentrate on training teachers to respond to an active shooter incident rather than drilling students.

It also issued guidelines for schools that decide to use drills. Those include giving parents, educators and students advance notice of any drill, working with



Students are led out of school as members of the Fountain Police Department take part in an Active Shooter Response Training exercise at Fountain Middle School in Fountain, Colo.

DOUGLAS BROWNLEE, THE (COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.) GAZETTE/AP

mental health officials to create age-appropriate and trauma-informed drills, never simulating an actual shooting and tracking the effects of drills.

About 95% of schools drilled students on lockdown procedures in the 2015-16 school year, according to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics.

"In Indiana, they were shooting teachers with rubber pellets so they would feel the adrenaline of what a school shooting would

feel like," said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action, which is part of Everytown. "In California recently, a superintendent hired a stranger to wear a mask to rattle the doors of classrooms without letting faculty and students know. We've seen students asked to pretend to be victims and lie down using fake blood in the hallway."

Jean-Paul Guilbault, the chief executive of the Alice Training Institute, which runs active

shooter drills, said that they are effective when done appropriately. He said his company never runs surprise drills, but believes that simulating an event is the best way to prepare for one "and allow students to practice their options, whether that be lockdown or evacuation."

"According to a recent study conducted by The U.S. Secret Service, most school shootings last for two minutes or less, and nearly half of the events studied

ended within one minute," he said in a written statement. "That means it is up to us to keep our selves safe for those seconds that will feel as slow as a lifetime. We drill so everyone has a plan when faced with danger, to give people a chance at survival."

But Abby Clements, who was teaching second grade at the Sandy Hook school in Newtown when a gunman killed 26 people in 2012, said that she doesn't believe a drill would have saved lives there.

"Our students knew what to do," said Clements, who now teaches at another elementary school in town. "We taught them what to do in an emergency. We knew evacuation routes and where a safe spot was in the room, where nobody could see inside, but frightening students with some type of active drill, I think that is barbaric. There is no way you could possibly be prepared for the infinite number of ways that a shooting could go down with these weapons of war."

Clements, an active member of Moms Demand Action, said that it breaks her heart when she hears stories like the one about a little girl who refused to wear light-up shoes after a drill, because she was told it could make her an easier target.

"I've got kids at the elementary school level who tell me they have to keep a cellphone on them at all times, just in case," she said. "It should not be like that."

Actor Jussie Smollett faces 6 new charges in Chicago

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Actor Jussie Smollett was indicted Tuesday for a second time on charges of lying to police about a racist and anti-gay attack he allegedly staged on himself in downtown Chicago, renewing a divisive criminal case that drew worldwide attention last year.

The indictment came from a special prosecutor who was appointed after Cook County prosecutors dropped the same charges last March.

The new charges were sure to reignite many of the tensions that surrounded Smollett a year ago. When his claims first emerged, he drew a groundswell of support from fans and celebrities and gave an emotional television interview about the attack.

The case came to reflect the polarized state of political discourse in America. Many Democrats initially called it a shocking instance of Trump-era racism as hate, while Republicans depicted it as yet another example of liberals rushing to judgment



Jussie Smollett

quately explained to special prosecutors why they did so. But Webb stressed that he had reached no conclusions about whether anyone involved in the case had engaged in any wrongdoing.

Smollett, who is black and gay, was originally charged with disorderly conduct in February 2019 for allegedly staging the attack and lying about it to investigators. The allegations were dropped the following month with little explanation, angering police officials and then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel.

Time Glandian. Smollett's attorney, questioned Webb's decision to file new charges.

The indictment "raises serious questions about the integrity of the investigation that led to the renewed charges" Glandian said, citing the use of the same detectives who were part of the original investigation into the attack to conduct the latest probe, despite Smollett's pending civil claims against the city and police officers for malicious prosecution.

He is scheduled to appear in court for arraignment on Feb. 24.

Transgender felons seek to ease state name change laws

By MARK SCOLFORD
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — A Pennsylvania court this week will consider a legal challenge by three transgender women to a two-decade-old state law that prohibits people who have committed serious felonies from ever changing their names.

Commonwealth Court will hear oral arguments Thursday in the lawsuit brought by plaintiffs who live as women but are unable to change their masculine first names because of a 1998 state law designed to prevent fraud.

Pennsylvania law requires any felon to wait at least two years after completion of their sentence to apply for a name change, and those convicted of certain more serious felonies are permanently barred from doing so.

"People have a fundamental right to control their own names, and that can't be overridden by legal prescription that felons are engaging in fraud when they seek a name change," the women's lawyers wrote in a court filing in May. Those who may not change their names are forced "to speak and write an undesired name in order to travel, vote, pay taxes or

simply conduct their daily lives," they argued.

The state attorney general's office said that the law was meant to enhance public safety and welfare and argued there is no fundamental right to a name change in the state constitution.

State Attorney General Josh Shapiro issued a statement Tuesday that his office has a responsibility to defend the constitutionality of Pennsylvania laws, "despite my personal opinion."

In a filing seeking dismissal, the attorney general's office argued that "the restrictions are rationally related to the valid concern that people with serious felony convictions may seek to assume a new identity in order to avoid detection and escape the consequences of their convictions."

The lawsuit does not seek to overturn the law entirely, only the section which prevents felons from going to court to show that their name change is not designed for a fraudulent purpose.

After oral arguments in Pittsburgh on Thursday, the Commonwealth Court panel could rule for either side or determine that a hearing is needed to present evidence.

WORLD

Radical Shiite cleric threatens to reject Iraqi PM designate

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — An influential Shiite preacher who heads a powerful political bloc in Iraq's Parliament threatened Tuesday to withdraw support for the candidate chosen by rival blocs as prime minister-designate, indicating that the formation of a new government was facing challenges.

Muqtada al-Sadr, who heads the Sairoon bloc that garnered the most seats in parliament following the May 2018 election, said in a statement posted on social media that he was losing confidence in prime minister-designate Mohammed Allawi and threatened to withdraw his support.

Citing "partisan and sectarian pressure" interfering in the government formation process, al-Sadr said that this has led to

a "lack of confidence" and "may even lead to declaring a disavowal" of Allawi's candidacy.

Allawi, like his predecessor, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, was a compromise candidate of rival blocs Sairoon and Fatah, which includes leaders associated with the paramilitary Popular Mobilization Units headed by Hadi al-Amiri.

In the May 2018 election, neither coalition won a commanding plurality that would have enabled it to name the premier, as stipulated by the Iraqi constitution. To avoid political crisis, Sairoon and Fatah forged a precarious union with Abdul-Mahdi as their prime minister. On Feb. 1, they chose Allawi to succeed Abdul-Mahdi, after he resigned under pressure from protests in December. Allawi has 30 days to formulate a government program and name Cabinet ministers.

Pope avoids the question of married priests in Amazon

By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis declined Wednesday to approve the ordination of married men to address a shortage of priests in the Amazon, sidestepping a fraught issue that has dominated debate in the Catholic Church and even involved retired Pope Benedict XVI.

Francis did not refer to the recommendations by Amazonian bishops to consider the ordination of married men or female deacons. Rather, the pope urged bishops to pray for more priestly vocations and to send missionaries to a region where Catholics in remote areas can go months or even years without Mass.

The papal dodge disappointed progressives, who had hoped he would, at the very least, put both questions to further study. Liberal Catholic women's groups were also outraged. Meanwhile, the news was a relief to conservatives who have used the debate over priestly celibacy to heighten opposition to the pope, whose strong

gest conservative critics have accused of heresy.

Francis' document, "Beloved Amazon," is instead a love letter to the Amazonian rain forest and its indigenous peoples, penned by history's first Latin American pope. Francis has long been concerned about the violent exploitation of the Amazon's land, its crucial importance to the global ecosystem and the injustices committed against its peoples.

"Beloved Amazon" is, in many ways, a synthesized and focused version of Francis' 2015 landmark environmental encyclical, "Praised Be," in which he blasted wealthy countries and multinational corporations for destroying the world's natural resources and impoverishing the poor for their own profit.

Francis said that he has four dreams for the Amazon: that the rights of the poor are respected, that their cultural riches are celebrated, that the Amazon's natural beauty and life are preserved and that its Christian communities show Amazonian features.

In their final document at the

end of the October synod, the majority of bishops called for the Vatican to reopen a study commission on ordaining women as deacons, a type of ministry in the church that allows for preaching, celebrating weddings and baptisms, but not consecrating the Eucharist. Francis had created such a commission in 2016 at the insistence of religious sisters who want more say and roles in church governance and ministry, but the group ended its work without reaching a consensus.

Groups that advocate for women's ordination and giving women greater roles in the Catholic Church blasted the document. Francis justified his refusal to consider ordained ministry for women as sparing them the risk of being "clericalized," or placed on a pedestal.

"This is a dereliction of his duty as a leader with the power to make positive change and challenge discrimination," said Miriam Duignan of the Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, a British-based progressive Catholic think tank.



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FACES

Horror not so scary anymore for Pedretti

By JOSEPH V. AMODIO
Newsday

Victoria Pedretti doesn't scare quite so easily anymore. At least, not since she's become TV's favorite new horror queen, a sort of "Jamie Lee Curtis, millennial edition."

Fans of the acclaimed Netflix series "The Haunting of Hill House" know Pedretti from her breakout performance as the warm and sympathetic twin Nell Crain. She nabbed that role just seconds after graduating from Carnegie Mellon University in 2017, and her success has led to two more roles: She returns to that series for its second season (called "Haunting of Bly Manor," an all-new spookfest out this year in which she plays a completely different character); and she stars in the second season of "You," another Netflix hit, playing the object of Penn Badgley's affection. Unfortunately, he's a sweet but obsessive serial killer and in the show's first season, well, things didn't work out so well for his lady friend.

Pedretti, 24, who grew up in and around Philadelphia, also recently appeared as a murderous Manson hippie in Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood." She recently spoke by phone with Newsday contributor Joseph V. Amodio from Vancouver, British Columbia, on a break from shooting "Bly Manor."

Newsday: In the first season of "You," Penn Badgley plays Joe Goldberg, who falls for a young writer. In Season 2, he's drawn to your character, Love Quinn, an aspiring chef. He seems to really go for creative types.

Pedretti: Definitely. He's definitely drawn to women who seem to have their own goals and ambitions. Which is a good quality, I guess.

Sure, aside from the pesky psychopath thing. Right.

How are your own skills in the kitchen? Are you much of a chef?

Definitely. I love to cook. I spent a lot of time in high school cooking instead of doing my homework.

What's your go-to dish?

I think pasta tends to warm people's hearts, you know? I put a lot of love into making pasta. But I like to try new things, too.

You're getting to be an old pro when it comes to horror stories and thrillers. Do you like to watch those kinds of tales?

Not really. Most of my life I've avoided that. I find life scary enough. I'm an actor. *(She laughs.)* I'm already really sensitive, I've gotta admit.

I'm partial to the classics, like "The Shining" and "Poltergeist." And I have a special place in my heart for "The Amityville Horror" because my grandparents actually lived in Amityville.

Oh, wow! That's so cool. So much of my experience with horror growing up was with kids trying to get everybody to go to the basement to watch a movie to see who could handle it the most.

Like a slasher pic?

Yeah. Those movies are all jump-scares. They mean a lot to some people, but it's never been my cup of tea. But I'm figuring it out. I've begun to see how horror isn't so different from a lot of the things you experience in a regular drama. And I'm appreciating the fact that these horror stories we tell relate to the folklore with which we've explained the world for so long. Monsters and ghosts and ghouls — societies have always been wrestling with the idea of death and what it means to die. So I've been watching a lot of horror, actually, to see how it's constructed.

What was it like working with "Gossip Girl" heartthrob Penn Badgley?

OH MY GOD! I miss him. He's the most lovely, creative, exuberant, intelligent man. He's really a great person to work with. A great collaborator and friend. I'm so excited for everybody to see the amazing work he's done this season.

Did he sort of welcome you to "You"?

Honestly, he was kind of on his lonesome, being one of the only people left from the first season. We shot in an entirely different place with an entirely different crew. And almost the entire cast was different. I feel a lot like him now on this second season of "Haunting," being one of the only people from the first season. It's interesting to go into another season of a show with such a different vibe. There's a lot of readjusting to do.

Victoria Pedretti is a rising star in TV horror, with roles in the second seasons of "You" and "The Haunting of Hill House."

ALBERTO E. RODRIGUEZ,
GETTY IMAGES/TVS



JOHN MINICILLI/AP

Poodle wins Westminster

Three days of competition in New York came to an end Tuesday as the judges at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show narrowed the field of 2,500 to just seven and then handed the Best in Show crown to a standard poodle named Siba.

Universal reverses course, plans to release 'The Hunt' film in March

Universal Pictures reversed an earlier decision to cancel the release of "The Hunt," a film about the rich elite killing conservatives that ignited a firestorm of controversy last year.

The film from Blumhouse Productions opens March 13, the studio division of Comcast Corp. said in a statement Tuesday. Plans to release the satirical horror film were shelved in August following mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, and a backlash against the liberals-hunting-conservatives storyline.

"The most talked about movie of the year is one that no one's actually seen," the producers say in a new poster for the film. "Decide for yourself."

In a series of tweets around the time "The Hunt" was pulled, President Donald Trump criticized the "racist" liberal Hollywood elite for creating a movie "made in order to inflame and cause chaos."

"The Hunt" follows 12 strangers who wake up in a forest clear-

ing and realize they are being targeted for sport by rich elites, including a wealthy woman played by Hilary Swank. Two allegedly leaked lines of the script describe a character "going out to the manor and slaughtering a dozen deplorables."

The term "deplorables" was used by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton in her last election to describe some Trump supporters, and the leaked dialogue inflamed some online chat groups.

A description of the movie released by Universal and early trailer suggest the rich elite are the antagonists in the film. The heroine appears to be a woman who is captured and fights back.

Since last year, the film's website has carried only a statement explaining the decision to pull the picture: "After thoughtful consideration, the studio has decided to cancel our plans to release the film. We stand by our filmmakers and will continue to distribute films in partnership with bold

and visionary creators, like those associated with this satirical social thriller."

Rap imposters accused of scamming hotels

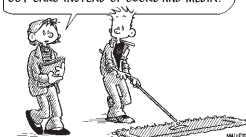
A crew of Rolls Royce-riding identity thieves who posed as rap industry figures scammed more than \$100,000 from some of the South's most exclusive hotels, prosecutors say.

The group told hotel workers they were with the entertainment firm Roc Nation, and listed the rap group Wu-Tang Clan with at least one of the hotels, according to a criminal complaint filed this week in U.S. District Court in Atlanta. Walker Washington and Aaron Barnes-Burpo are charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Credit cards used in the scam included one that was stolen, and another that was likely fake, the complaint states.

From wire reports

Frazz

SERIOUSLY, IMAGINE IF LIBRARIES LENT OUT CARS INSTEAD OF BOOKS AND MEDIA.



WOULD PEOPLE TAKE ADVANTAGE, OR WOULD THEY KEEP BUYING THEIR OWN CARS?



IF I FOLLOW YOUR ANALOGY, THE BIGGER ISSUE WOULD BE PEOPLE WHO HAVE QUIT DRIVING ALTOGETHER.

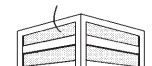


Dilbert

NOW THAT THE NETWORK INSTALLATION IS HALF-DONE, I HAVE YOU IDIOTS RIGHT WHERE I WANT YOU.



IT'S TOO LATE FOR YOU TO GET A NEW VENDOR, SO I'LL BE PRICE-GOUGING YOU ON UPDATES YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WOULD NEED.



WHY ARE YOU TELLING US???



IT MAKES IT MORE FUN FOR ME.



Pearls Before Swine

OKAY, RAT, I'M GIVING PEOPLE THIS TEST FOR WHETHER THEY'RE AN OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST.



DO YOU SEE THIS GLASS AS HALF-FULL OR HALF-EMPTY?



I GUESS I SEE IT AS NOT MATTERING BECAUSE ONE DAY WE ALL DIE AND ARE FORGOTTEN AND EVERYTHING ON EARTH IS DESTROYED WHEN THE SUN EXPANDS.



I'D PUT THAT DOWN AS PESSIMIST.



OH, AND THAT ASSUMES WE DON'T BLOW OURSELVES UP FIRST.



Non Sequitur



Candorville

FORD'S TELLING ME MY NEW BRAKES AND ROTORS ARE GONNA COST ME \$1900.



I DON'T KNOW, LEMMON. OF ALL THE THINGS YOU DO IN A CAR...



... STOPPING IS MAYBE THE MOST IMPORTANT.

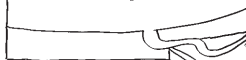


I'M NOT SURE I'D TRUST MY BRAKES TO 'A GUY'.



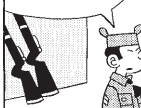
Carpe Diem

YOU'RE EXTREMELY TALENTED AND HIGHLY INTELLIGENT, BUT WE FIND YOUR GENERATION'S LOVE OF "EPIC FAILS" A BIT WORKING.



Beetle Bailey

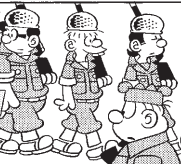
HOW COME YOU NEVER ASK ME TO FIGHT IN THE WAR GAMES?



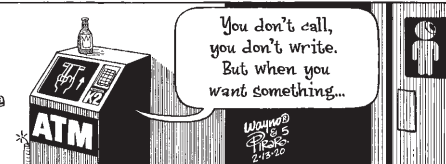
OK, GRAB YOUR WEAPON AND JOIN.



I'M A CYBER-WARRIOR.



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12						13			14				
15						16			17				
18					19			20	21				
			22						23				
24	25	26				27	28	29			30	31	
32						33					34		
35			36	37						38			
			39					40	41				
42	43					44		45			46	47	48
49						50	51			52			
53						54				55			
56						57				58			

ACROSS

- 1 Pedestal
- 5 Flow out
- 8 Duel tool
- 12 Temporary calm
- 13 Take to court
- 14 Minus
- 15 Spoken
- 16 Stick with a kick
- 17 Golf hazard
- 18 Ritzy appetizer
- 20 James Clavell novel
- 22 Discoverer's call
- 23 Spanish gold
- 24 Beer ingredient
- 27 Venetian vessels
- 32 LAX info
- 33 Zsa Zsa's sister
- 34 Big fuss
- 35 Layered pasta entrees
- 38 Answer an invite
- 39 Historic period
- 40 TV schedule abbr.
- 42 Tastelessly showy
- 45 Des Moines natives
- 49 PTA and NEA, e.g.
- 50 Tennis feat
- 52 Panache
- 53 Chills and fever

DOWN

- 4 Apr. addressee
- 55 Asian desert
- 56 Oodles
- 57 Parcel of land
- 58 Sudden wind
- 19 "I see"
- 21 Mortar carrier
- 24 Actor Gibson
- 25 One-time link
- 26 Sci-fi zapper
- 28 Eggs
- 29 Most spiteful
- 30 Adj. modifier
- 31 Soak (up)
- 36 Comes up
- 37 Petrol
- 38 Steak tartare ingredient
- 41 Little — Peep
- 42 Capricorn
- 43 Jason's ship
- 44 Greet
- 46 Matty of baseball
- 47 Apprehends
- 48 Tizzy
- 51 — -Magonn

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	L	A	B		R	A	M		S	M	O	G
O	I	S	E		C	I	A		W	A	V	E
H	A	I	L	M	A	R	Y		I	R	A	N
O	R	A	L	S		A	R	G		Y	L	E
					E	T	N	A		H	S	T
J	A	M	S		I	D	L	E		O	A	F
A	L	A			I	N	D	I	A		D	N
G	E	R			S	A	L	E		A	D	I
					Y	O	N			E	D	I
I	M	L	A	T	E		C	O	D	E	D	
M	O	A	T		L	A	D	Y		M	A	R
A	N	N	E		M	A	A			I	N	R
M	O	D	S		S	A	D			C	A	S

2-13

CRYPTOQUIP

RBWDQSA UMFSIR KUNIX
CEMUNFEUNC CEW GUXQWR
UK GWSNCQKNA ZOCEQDSA

ZSQXWIR: IOZBE IUXWR.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT GUY MADE A FORTUNE BY RUNNING A COMPANY THAT PRODUCES BEEF BROTH. HE'S A BOUILLON-AIRE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals O

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

Trump broke no laws when he fired Vindman

By JONATHAN TURLEY
Special to The Washington Post

“Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t after you.” Those words, from the fictional Capt. John Yossarian in Joseph Heller’s satiric novel “Catch-22,” could well have come from President Donald Trump. Trump’s move against two impeachment witnesses (and a third man, the twin brother of one of the witnesses) has enraged and struck many as pure retaliation, and has led to calls for criminal and oversight investigations. Yet, while I believe that actions taken against Gordon Sondland, U.S. ambassador to the European Union, and National Security Council staff member Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman were wrong, they are both legal and not unprecedented.

Various experts, such as CNN legal analyst Elie Honig, have described the removals as “criminal” while Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called on 74 inspectors general for “immediate action to investigate the president’s actions in retaliation” against whistleblowers by the Trump administration.

The suggestion that the president’s actions are criminal is ironic on several levels. In 1867, Congress passed a law making retaliatory firings of public officials by a president a “high misdemeanor.” That law led the House to impeach President Andrew Johnson after he fired Edwin Stanton, the secretary of war. The case failed in the Senate, and the Supreme Court later noted that the Tenure of Office Act was facially unconstitutional. It would be equally unconstitutional to make the moving of Vindman back to the Pentagon or the termination of Sondland a crime. This action is not obstruction or witness tampering,

and those officials are not guaranteed to retain such positions indefinitely.

What made these actions wrong, however, was that they appear as retaliatory as they were unnecessary. Vindman and Sondland were reportedly planning to leave their respective posts within a few weeks. Trump clearly wanted to fire them to send a message — a message visibly conveyed by the image of Vindman being unceremoniously escorted out of the White House. Moreover, the removal of Vindman’s twin brother (who never testified) smacks of medieval blood-revenge punishment.

The replacement of these officials, however, was neither unexpected nor unprecedented. Presidents have often distrusted officials from prior administrations, including civil servants. Thomas Jefferson opposed the administration of his predecessor as the “reign of the witches” and, accordingly, his removal of Federalist sympathizers could be viewed as the “witch hunt” in government.

Presidents have also named officials for what they viewed as insubordination or opposition to the administration. Harry Truman fired the hugely popular Gen. Douglas MacArthur in the middle of the Korean War. President Barack Obama forced out Adm. Dennis Blair, who was at the time director of national intelligence, after he opposed certain policies such as drone strikes. Obama also sacked International Security Assistance Force commander Gen. Stanley McChrystal after he had been openly critical of the president in a Rolling Stone story. Trump fired national security adviser Michael Flynn when it was disclosed that he shared sensitive information without authorization.

White House officials and diplomats serve at the pleasure of the president and are thus the ultimate “at-will employees.”

Biden’s the last of his species, white ethnic politician

By DAVID VON DREHLE
The Washington Post

The writing was on the wall even before the New Hampshire votes came in Tuesday night. Another promising Joe Biden presidential campaign has found another iceberg to ram and, once again, the orchestra’s playing “Nearer My God to Thee.”

Is anyone surprised, really? The Democrats talking for the past year about Biden’s electability and his front-runner status have reminded me of grown-ups discussing Santa Claus in front of the children. They knew the illusion wouldn’t last forever, but nobody wanted to be one to spoil it.

There is something about this gaudy golden retriever of a politician — so friendly, so forthright, so eager to please — that doesn’t click on the presidential level. Three times he’s tried, but despite his public service, despite his ease on the stump, despite his bottomless reservoir of anecdotes (some true, some not) and aphorisms (some apt, some baffling), he never won a tickle of an electoral vote. He’s a politician — so friendly, so forthright, so eager to please — that doesn’t click on the presidential level. Three times he’s tried, but despite his public service, despite his ease on the stump, despite his bottomless reservoir of anecdotes (some true, some not) and aphorisms (some apt, some baffling), he never won a tickle of an electoral vote.

The United States has about 330 million people in it, and only one wins the presidency — every four years. Powerball’s a cinch compared to this. You’re more likely to play quarterback in a Super Bowl.

The apparent end of another Biden presidential bid marks not just the passing of a perennial loser, but the passing of the end of the white ethnic pol. Though Biden is no Kennedy or Daley, he bears many of the identifying traits of a classic Irish American on the hustings. There’s the blarney, sure, and the heart on the sleeve, but also the pragmatism, the idea that fist-buffs in the aftermath by a beer together in the pub; the principle that

I’ll get mine and you’ll get yours and we’ll all be happy so long as mine’s a bit more than yours.

Irish-machine politics built New York, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City — the list goes on and on. A kind of apostrophe was reached in the early 1980s, when Republican Ronald Reagan was in the White House and Democratic Speaker Thomas “Tip” O’Neill ran Congress, two sons of the Old Sod who could never be mistaken for anything else. I imagine they recognized each other and wished they were Joe Biden, senator from Delaware, that they would be hard-pressed to find in a younger generation.

They came from a world in which being white and male was just the beginning of one’s identity. In the Chicago of 50 years ago, you’d wish your name was Rostenkowski, Blandick, Annunzio or Mikva. The answer told you which ward you were likely to live in and which voters you could count as your base.

How completely that world has vanished was made clear by the brief rise of Beto O’Rourke, the former congressman from Texas, who lost to Joe Biden, mayor of the Democratic Party. Robert Francis O’Rourke bears a passing resemblance, in both manner and forelock, to the Irish American prince Bobby Kennedy, with whom he shares two of his three names. His third name, white, is O-apostrophe, a flashing neon sign of Irishness. And yet another kid mistaking him for Hispanic.

It’s not just Irish heritage that has become a nonfactor. I’ve heard a lot of people ask how to pronounce the name “Buttigieg,” but none have asked the question that was so common a generation ago: “(Who) kind of names is that?” (Maltese.) Same with “Klobuchar” (Slovenian). As

Presidents are generally allowed to pick their advisers and staffs for good reason, bad reason or no reason at all.

While he could rest on his inherent authority, Trump could cite one obvious reason for his actions. Both of these men were ordered not to appear as the White House litigated challenges to congressional demands. They disobeyed and testified without approval or White House counsel. Nevertheless, Trump wanted to allow them to testify before taking any action.

While it is often overlooked, Trump has shown that key officials involved in the original Russian investigation opposed his election. More importantly, Trump was right about that investigation. Not only was there no collusion between Moscow and his campaign but the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court recently declared that two of the warrants for secret surveillance under the Obama administration in 2016 were “not valid” because of a lack of probable cause and “material misstatements and omissions.” Likewise, a Justice Department official who handled the FISA applications was not only a fervent critic of the warrants but suggested for a critical document to secure the surveillance.

So, to use the words of Heller’s Capt. Yossarian, there really were people out to get the president. More importantly, the law does not require that Trump work with people who hold deep-seated opposition to his past judgment or actions. That hardly bodes well for any working relationship. While one can debate whether it is a presidential or paranoid impulse, it is neither unlawful nor exceptional from a legal or historical perspective.

Jonathan Turley is the chair of public interest law at George Washington University and served as the last lead counsel in an impeachment trial before the Senate in defense of Judge Thomas Porteous.

recently as 1988 — Biden’s first presidential foray — the Democratic nominee, Michael Dukakis, leaned heavily into his Greek American heritage. Today, the geographic origin stories of white candidates rarely come up.

No doubt the melting of white ethnicity in the bubbling pot of American diversity explains some of this. As each generation grows more distant from the homogenous homeland, the whims of romance and free association erode the immigrant identity. There has been a questionably American to be part of this third part that with a little of the other mixed in. Ads for home DNA tests stress the idea that none of us really knows from who or where we come.

But it is also true that we’ve elevated other identities above place of origin. If Pete Buttigieg should be elected in November, headlines will say he’s the first gay president, not the first Maltese American president, or if Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., wins, she’ll be the first woman to be elected, not the first Slovenian American.

To be straight, white and male is taxonomic enough in today’s politics, with no further differentiation required or desired. That’s progress of a certain type — proof that the highest echelons of government are opening up to people who don’t fit those characteristics. But progress means leaving something behind, and in this case what’s left is the brawling, brawny, but yet varied variety of which those WMMs were capable. The young voters who look at Biden and see only a white guy whose time has past missed the best part.

Joey, they hardly knew ye.

David Von Drehle is a Washington Post columnist. He is the author of “Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America’s Most Perilous Year.”

SCOREBOARD/LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.
myafn.af

Pro football

NFL				
East Division	Pct	PF	PA	
DC	1	0	1,000	31
Los Angeles	1	0	1,000	17
St. Louis	1	0	1,000	15
Tampa Bay	1	0	1,000	23

West Division				
W	L	PF	PA	
Houston	0	1	0	1,000
Dallas	0	1	0	9
Los Angeles	0	1	0	17
Seattle	0	1	0	19

Saturday's games
 DC 31, Seattle 19
 Houston 17, Los Angeles 17
Sunday's games
 New York 23, Tampa Bay 34
 St. Louis 15, Dallas 9

Saturday, Feb. 15
 New York at DC
 Tampa Bay at Seattle
Sunday, Feb. 16
 Dallas at Los Angeles
 St. Louis at Houston

Deals

Tuesday's transactions

BASEBALL
AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Claimed INF Ramon Urias off waivers from St. Louis. Signed INF Paul Vaila outright to Norfolk (IL).
NATIONAL LEAGUE
RED SOX — Promoted bench coach Ron Roenicke to interim manager. Called up Matt Centeno and Of Cesar Puello to minor league contracts.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Danny Santana. LHP Mike Taylor, OF Eric Fila and INF Allen Hanson to be released.

TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Taylor Jungmann on a minor league contract. RHP Jake Pentecost on a minor league contract.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with RHP Jake Pentecost on a minor league contract.

CINCINNATI REDS — Assigned RHP Sal Romano outright to Louisville (IL).

BASKETBALL
WOMEN'S NBA
CONNECTICUT SUN — Acquired G DeWanna Bonner from Phoenix for two 2020 second-round (No. 7 and No. 10) draft picks and a 2021 first-round draft pick.

MINNESOTA LYNX — Named Rebekkah Brunson assistant coach.

WASHINGTON MYSTICS — Re-signed F Elena Delle Donne.

FOOTBALL
NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
CLEVELAND BRONCOS — Named Jeff Howard pass game coordinator/defensive backs coach.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — CB Davon Harrison released on retirement.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Signed DB Lenzy Pipkins.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Promoted Bruce Nilani and G Beverly to senior vice president for both the Titans and Nissan Stadium.

NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
NHL — Fined Vancouver F Antoine Rostovetsky \$50,000 for slashing Nashville D Yannick Weber during a Feb. 10 game.

TEXAS STARS — Signed D Ryan Faden to Texas (AHL) on a conditioning assignment.

DETROIT RED WINGS — Assigned Fs Troy Horsch and Givani Smith to Grand Rapids (AHL).

NEW YORK RANGERS — Reassigned D Brandon Dubinsky to Hartford (AHL).

WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Reassigned D Martin Fehervary to Hershey (AHL).

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER
FC DALLAS — Loaned D Kevin Montgomerie to San Antonio FC (USL).

LOS ANGELES FC — Traded D Walker Zimmerman to Nashville SC for \$600,000 in 2020 General Allocation Money (GAM), 2020 2021 GAM, and a 2020 international roster spot.

MINNESOTA UNITED — Acquired M Raheem Edwards from Chicago for D Wyatt Omberson.

PENNSYLVANIA TIMBERS — Acquired \$150,000 in 2020 General Allocation Money (GAM), \$100,000 in 2020 International Roster Spot, and a 2020 international roster slot.

National Women's Soccer League
NWSL — Signed M Sydney Leroux to a one-year contract.

ST. LOUIS SPIRITS — Signed M Wynne Vicens to a two-year contract and D Kaleigh Riehl to a one-year contract.

COLLEGE
MEMPHIS — Named Lindsey Crowsdow volleyball assistant softball coach.

ROUTERS — Named Jose Susan special assistant to the head coach.

College basketball

Tuesday's men's scores

EAST
 Adelphi 107, Le Moyne 99
 Assumption 93, St. Michael's 74
 Brockport 104, Fredonia 51
 Colby 72, Bates 61
 Farmingdale 58, OldWestbury 70
 Geneseo 78, Buffalo 51
 Gordon 83, Roger Williams 74
 Manhattanville 72, Merchant Marine 68, OT

Maryland 72, Nebraska 70
 Miami St. Vincent 81, Joseph's (LI) 72
 NC State 79, Syracuse 74
 New England 98, Curry 79
 Nichols 32, W. New England 77
 Oneonta 92, Cortland 71
 Quinnipiac 98, Pace 94, OT
 SUNY Maritime 73, Mount St. Mary 71
 Salve Regina 98, Endicott 89
 Sarah Lawrence 89, Purchase 80
 St. Anselm 72, St. New Hampshire 61
 St. Bonaventure 74, Saint Joseph 56
 Valley Forge 106, Penn St.-Bradleyville 39
 Vespa 91, St. Joseph's (NY) 52

SOUTH
 Barton 72, Chowan 68
 Belmont Abbey 93, Erskine 57
 Brainerd 75, Covenant 67
 Davidson 79, Fordham 49
 Carolina 51, Smith 70
 St. Augustine 51
 Kentucky 78, Vanderbilt 64
 LSU 82, Missouri 78
 Mississippi 83, Mississippi State 58
 North Greenville 87, Bob Jones 76
 Piedmont 80, Lagrange 75
 Tennessee 82, Arkansas 61
 Virginia 50, Notre Dame 45, OT

MIDWEST
 Wake Forest 74, North Carolina 57
 Akron 74, Bowling Green 59
 Ball St. 63, N. Illinois 59
 Dayton 81, Rhode Island 67
 E. Michigan 73, Cent. Michigan 70
 Madonna Baptist 86, Ball State 70
 Michigan St. 70, Illinois 69
 Ohio 73, W. Michigan 61
 Oklahoma St. 64, Kansas St. 59
 Penn St. 88, Purdue 76
 Indiana 55, Spalding 91
 Toledo 65, Miami (OH) 57

FAR WEST
 Boise St. 74, Air Force 57
 San Diego St. 82, New Mexico 59
 Seattle 81, Gonzaga 86, St. Mary's 75
 Utah St. 75, Colorado St. 72

AP Men's Top 25 schedule
Thursday's games
 No. 16 Colorado at No. 17 Oregon
 No. 21 Duke at No. 12 Indiana

Friday's games
 No. 10 games scheduled

USA Today Women's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the USA Today Women's College Basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, released today. The top 25 teams received 25 points for a first-place vote and through one to a 25th-place vote and last one with five's ranking:

Rank	Team	Record	Pts	Pct
1.	South Carolina (17)	21-1	774	1
2.	Baylor (12)	21-1	774	1
3.	Oregon (3)	22-2	745	3
4.	North Carolina St.	21-2	668	7
5.	Kentucky (1)	21-2	668	7
6.	Connecticut	20-3	620	6
7.	Duke (1)	21-1	641	5
8.	UCLA	21-2	604	10
9.	Louisville	21-3	538	4
10.	Maryland	20-4	490	12
11.	Oregon State	19-5	471	9
12.	Arizona	19-4	435	12
13.	DePaul	21-2	414	14
14.	Florida State	20-4	348	18
15.	Gonzaga	23-2	334	11
16.	Michigan State	21-3	318	15
17.	Miami St.	20-3	242	19
18.	Texas A&M	18-5	239	16
19.	Kansas (2)	18-6	239	16
20.	Iowa	20-4	210	20
21.	Northwestern	21-2	204	21
22.	Florida Gulf Coast	24-2	120	24
23.	South Dakota	21-3	118	25
24.	Arizona State	18-8	88	21
25.	Princeton	17-1	88	21

Tuesday's women's scores

EAST
 Kansas St. 56, West Virginia 55
 Marist 63, Rider 58
 Monmouth (NJ) 56, Iona 50
SOUTH
 Campbell 68, High Point 66
 Gardner-Webb 73, Longwood 70
 Hampton 62, Winthrop 48
 Kennesaw 54, Shorter 55
 SC-Union 71, Charleston Southern 64
 USC-Ashville 64, Presbyterian 48

SOUTHWEST
 Oklahoma St. 73, Oklahoma 69
 SMU 53, East Carolina 45

AP Women's Top 25 schedule

Thursday's games
 No. 1 South Carolina vs. No. 17 Auburn
 No. 4 N.C. State vs. No. 9 Louisville
 No. 10 Kentucky vs. No. 12 Duke
 No. 15 Gonzaga vs. San Francisco
 No. 16 Texas A&M vs. Vanderbilt
 No. 18 Northwestern at Michigan
 No. 20 Indiana at Illinois
 No. 21 South Dakota vs. Western Illinois
 No. 25 Tennessee at LSU
Friday's games
 No. 3 Oregon at No. 7 UCLA
 No. 8 Stanford at Utah
 No. 11 Oregon State at Southern Cal
 No. 12 Arizona vs. Washington
 No. 13 DePaul vs. Butler
 No. 22 Arizona State vs. Washington State

College hockey

Tuesday's score

American International 6, Sacred Heart 2

Tennis

New York Open

Tuesday
NBC Live
Purse: \$715,320
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Men's Singles
 Jordan Thompson, Australia, def. Ivo Karlovic, Croatia, 6-3, 7-6 (2)
 Kwon Soon Woo, South Korea, def. Go Soeda, Japan, 6-2, 6-7 (2), 6-3
 Kyle Edmund (6), Britain, def. Yasutaka Uchiyama, Japan, 6-3, 6-4
 Fabio Fognini (4), Italy, def. Danilo Petrangola, Serbia, 4-6, 6-4, 6-0
 Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Bradley Schrier, Canada, 6-4, 6-3
 Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, def. Henri Laaksonen, Switzerland, 6-3, 6-0, 6-2
 Cameron Norrie (7), Britain, def. Brian Shi, United States, 7-6 (3), 6-3

Women's Doubles
 Jason Jung, Taiwan, def. Kevin Anderson, South Africa, 7-6 (6), 6-4
Men's Doubles
 Robert Lindstedt, Sweden, and Tennyson Sandgren, United States, def. Shwanj Ali, United States, and Otago Kovalev, Russia, 6-1, 6-0

Steve Johnson and Reilly Opelka, United States, def. Ugo Humbert, France, and Jackson Withers, United States, 6-4, 2-6, 10-8

Nicholas Monroe and Jack Sock, United States, def. Luke Bambridge, Britain, and Ben McLachlan (4), Japan, 7-6 (4), 7-5

St. Petersburg Open
Wednesday
AT Sport Club Open
St. Petersburg, Russia
Purse: \$762,900
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Women's Singles
 Alize Cornet, France, def. Jelena Ostapenko, Latvia, 6-1, 6-2

Round of 16
 Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 7-6 (2), 6-3
 Oceane Dodin, France, def. Johanna Konta (4), Britain, 6-3, 6-0

Belinda Bencic (1), Switzerland, def. Svetlana Kuznetsov, Russia, 6-4 (6), 6-4
Women's Doubles
 Katarina Srebotnik, Slovenia, and Alla Kudryavtseva, Russia, def. Oksana Kalashnikova, Georgia, and Cristina Anicea, Romania, 6-3, 2-6, 10-6

Sharon Fichman, Canada, and Hayley Carter (6), Canada, def. Vera Zvonareva and Ekaterina Alexandrova, Russia, 6-2, 6-1

Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, and Anastasia Potapova, Russia, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, and Aliecia Rosolska, Poland, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 10-3

ABN AMRO World Tournament
Wednesday
AT and Rotterdam
Rotterdam, Netherlands
Purse: \$702,855
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Men's Singles
 Jannik Sinner, Italy, def. Radu Albot, Moldova, Walker, France, def. Mikhail Kukushkin, Kazakhstan, 7-6 (3), 3-6, 6-3

David Goffin (6), Belgium, def. Robin Haase, Netherlands, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4
 Gael Monfils (4), France, def. Joao Sousa, Portugal, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1

Round of 16
 Pablo Carreno Busta, Spain, def. Roberto Bautista-Agut (6), Spain, 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (4)

Men's Doubles
 Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert (2), France, def. Philipp Horst, France, and Mate Pavić, Croatia, 6-3, 6-4

Oliver Marach, Austria, and Raven Klaasen (6), South Africa, def. David Pate and Sander Arends, Netherlands, 6-3, 7-5

Pro baseball
MLB calendar
Feb. 4-21 — Salary arbitration hearings, Phoenix.
Feb. 16 — Voluntary reporting date for other players.
Feb. 21 — Mandatory reporting date.
March 26 — Opening day, active rosters reported.
April 18-19 — San Diego vs. Arizona at Mexico City.
April 19-20 — New York Mets vs. Miami at San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Jan. 10-12 — Amateur draft, Omaha, Neb.
June 15 — International amateur signing period closes.
July 2 — International amateur signing period opens.

2 Ohio St. players charged with rape

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Two Ohio State University football players were booked into jail early Wednesday on charges of rape and kidnapping, police said.

Police charged defensive players Amir I. Riep and Jansen L. Wint, both

to shower before driving her back to her home.

"We are aware that two of our students have been arrested and criminally charged," Ohio State spokesman

Ben Johnson said in a statement to the Associated Press. "They have been suspended from all activities involving the football program. We will share more information when available."

Riep is a 6-foot-1, 185-pound cornerback entering his senior season for Ohio State's top-5 football program, while Wint is a 6-foot, 198-pound redshirt senior safety, according to court documents and the university's athletics website.

Ben Johnson said in a statement to the Associated Press. "They have been suspended from all activities involving the football program. We will share more information when available."

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according to the affidavit, but he again forced her to have oral sex.

After several minutes, they stopped and Riep told the woman that she needed to say what happened was "consensual on a video recording while laughing at her," according to the affidavit. Riep then told the woman she needed

to shower before driving her back to her home.

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Riep is a 6-foot-1, 185-pound cornerback entering his senior season for Ohio State's top-5 football program, while Wint is a 6-foot, 1

NHL

Gourde's OT goal gives Lightning 8th straight win

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — The puck ended up on Yanni Gourde's stick and for a split second, the only thing the Tampa Bay Lightning forward felt was a sense of panic.

It passed. It always does these days for the NHL's hottest team.

Gourde collected Brayden Point's cross-ice feed and ripped a shot to the short side over the right arm of Pittsburgh goaltender Matt Murray to give the Lightning a 2-1 overtime victory Tuesday night. The win was Tampa Bay's eighth straight and 20th in its last 23 games and came at the end of a draining back-to-back that started with an emotional overtime triumph in Columbus on Monday.

Barely 24 hours later, the Lightning found a way yet again despite playing the third period and the extra session without leading scorer Nikita Kucherenko, who left late in the second with a lower-body injury. Still, Tampa Bay kept right on rolling when Gourde found the back of the net 2:45 into OT for his seventh of the season and first since Nov. 23.

Gourde admitted he thought about going over Murray's glove but sensed an opening up high.

The Lightning's 38th and last shot ended with the goal lamp blinking red as Gourde's teammates poured over the boards in celebration.

"It was a huge team effort and it really felt great to score that goal at the end there, finally," Gourde said.

Mikhail Sergachev scored his ninth goal and Andrei Vasilevsky stopped 35 shots for Tampa Bay, which drew within one point of Atlantic Division leader Boston for the best record in the NHL.

"That was definitely a mash unit tonight," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said. "It's a tough league to win in, especially against a team as talented as that. But that was one of the guttier ones I've seen."

Evgeni Malkin got his 18th goal for the Penguins and Murray finished with 36 saves but didn't get his right arm high enough fast enough to get a piece of Gourde's winner. Jason Zucker played 15:26 in his debut with Pittsburgh after being acquired in a trade with Minnesota on Monday.

The Penguins, who have been searching for a replacement for injured All-Star forward Jake Guentzel, moved aggressively to land Zucker. Pittsburgh sent forward



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

The Pittsburgh Penguins' Jared McCann, left, works in front of Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender Andrei Vasilevsky with Mitchell Stephens, right, defending during the Lightning's 2-1 overtime win Tuesday.

ward Alex Galchenyuk, defensive prospect Calen Addison and a conditional 2020 first-round draft pick to the Wild in exchange for Zucker, a proven two-way player who can do a little bit of everything.

The Pens didn't exactly give Zucker time to get settled. In the span of a day he went from playing on the fourth line on a team with fading postseason hopes to serving on the top line with Sidney Crosby for a franchise where reaching the playoffs has been a

given for well over a decade.

Zucker called his rushed move from Minneapolis to Pittsburgh "surreal" and acknowledged it was "bizarre" to pull on Penguins' black and yellow after spending his entire career with the Wild. While his new teammates praised Zucker's skill and speed, Zucker believes he wasn't particularly sharp in his debut.

"I don't think I played very well tonight," he said. "My hands were terrible. I pretty much mis-handled every puck."

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Boston	57	34	11	12	80	188	143		
Tampa Bay	57	37	15	5	79	203	152		
Toronto	57	30	19	8	68	203	189		
Florida	56	29	20	6	66	196	188		
Montreal	58	27	24	8	61	179	176		
Buffalo	57	25	24	8	58	162	178		
Ottawa	56	18	27	11	47	147	191		
Detroit	58	14	40	4	32	120	216		

Metropolitan Division

Washington	56	36	15	5	77	202	172
Pittsburgh	55	34	15	6	74	182	150
N.Y. Islanders	55	33	16	6	72	166	151
Columbus	57	30	17	10	70	148	139
Philadelphia	57	31	19	7	69	184	170
Carolina	56	32	21	3	67	181	157
N.Y. Rangers	55	28	23	4	60	181	174
New Jersey	55	20	25	10	50	152	195

Western Conference

Central Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
St. Louis	55	32	15	9	73	178			
Colorado	55	32	16	6	72	200	154		
Dallas	56	32	19	5	69	151	142		
Winnipeg	58	28	24	5	63	174	176		
Minnesota	56	27	23	6	60	173	181		
Nashville	55	26	22	7	59	178	183		
Chicago	56	25	23	8	58	166	178		

Pacific Division

Vancouver	57	31	21	5	67	187	175
Edmonton	56	30	20	6	66	181	176
Calgary	57	29	22	6	64	161	173
Vegas	58	28	22	8	64	182	178
Arizona	59	28	23	8	64	165	162
Anaheim	56	23	26	7	53	146	173
San Jose	56	24	28	4	52	147	187
Los Angeles	57	19	33	5	43	137	183

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Tuesday's games

Buffalo @ Detroit	2
Colorado @ Ottawa	0
Florida @ New Jersey	3
N.Y. Islanders @ Philadelphia	1
Tampa Bay @ Pittsburgh	1, OT
Toronto @ Arizona	2, OT
Minnesota @ Vegas	1
N.Y. Rangers @ Winnipeg	1
Dallas @ Carolina	1
Colorado @ Columbus	0
Edmonton @ Chicago	3
St. Louis @ Anaheim, ppd.	

Wednesday's games

Montreal @ St. Louis	1
Calgary @ Vancouver	1
San Jose @ Los Angeles	1
Chicago @ Vancouver	1

Thursday's games

Columbus @ Buffalo	1
Los Angeles @ Tampa Bay	1
Philadelphia @ Florida	0
Arizona @ Ottawa	1
N.Y. Islanders @ Nashville	1
N.Y. Rangers @ Minnesota	1
San Jose @ Colorado	1
Calgary @ Anaheim	1
St. Louis @ Vegas	1

Friday's games

Montreal @ Pittsburgh	1
N.Y. Rangers @ Columbus	1
San Jose @ Winnipeg	1
New Jersey @ Carolina	1

Roundup

Panthers down Devils, stop 3-game skid

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Florida's fourth line of Mike Matheson, Mark Pysyk and Noel Accardi each scored and accounted for eight points Tuesday as the Panthers snapped a three-game losing streak with a 5-3 defeat of the New Jersey Devils.

Frank Vatrano and Brett Connolly also scored as the Panthers won for only the second time (2-4-1) since returning from the All-Star break. Sam Montembeault had 25 saves in his first start since Nov. 24.

Jack Hughes, Kevin Rooney and Kyle Palmieri scored for the Devils, who saw their season-high six-game (3-0-3) point streak snapped. Louis Domingue made 28 saves in getting a start for MacKenzie Blackwood, who had shutouts in his last two starts.

Sabres 3, Red Wings 2: Sam Reinhart jammed in a loose puck for the go-ahead goal 57 seconds into the third period in host Buffalo's win over Detroit.

Marcus Johansson had a goal and assist and Conor Sheary

also scored in a game the Sabres overcame two one-goal deficits. Carter Hutton stopped 27 shots, and Buffalo won for just the third time in nine (3-5-1) games.

The Red Wings' Darren Helm scored twice for his 11th multi-goal game and first since scoring twice on Oct. 17, 2016. Anthony Mantha had two assists in playing his first game after missing 20 with a rib injury and punctured lung.

Maple Leafs 3, Coyotes 2 (OT): Kasperian Kapkanen scored 3:43 into overtime and host Toronto beat Arizona.

Zach Hyman had two goals in regulation for the Maple Leafs, and Alexander Kerfoot added two assists. Jack Campbell stopped 35 shots.

Carl Soderberg and Christian Dvorak scored for the Coyotes.

Islanders 5, Flyers 3: Ryan Pulock scored the tiebreaking goal with 41 seconds remaining and host New York recovered after giving up a three-goal lead and beat Philadelphia.

Josh Bailey, Jordan Eberle and Leo Komarov each had a goal and

an assist, and Matt Martin also scored to help the Islanders win for the fifth time in eight games (5-1-2). Mathew Barzal had three assists.

Rangers 4, Jets 1: Chris Kreider scored twice and visiting New York snapped Winnipeg's three-game winning streak.

Ryan Strome and Mika Zibanejad each had a goal and assist for the Rangers.

Nikolaj Ehlers had Winnipeg's lone goal. The loss also ended the Jets' five-game point streak (4-0-1).

Wild 4, Golden Knights 0: Kevin Fiala had a goal and two assists, and host Minnesota matched its season high with three power-play scores on the way to a win over Vegas.

Joel Eriksson Ek, Jared Spurgeon and Zach Parise scored with the man advantage, giving the Wild an NHL-leading 15 power-play goals in 33 opportunities over their last 11 games.

Stars 4, Hurricanes 1: Jamie Benn got his sixth career hat trick — despite putting only two pucks in the net — and host Dallas beat

Carolina.

Benn scored the game's first goal in the first period, added a power-play tally in the second and was awarded his third with 1:19 to play when he was pulled down on the way to shooting at an empty net.

Avalanche 3, Senators 0: Mikko Rantanen scored in the first period following a terrific twist move, Philipp Grubauer stopped 34 shots for his second shutout of the season and Colorado blanked Ottawa.

Valeri Nichushkin scored a power-play goal in the third for the Avalanche, who've won five straight.

Oilers 5, Blackhawks 3: Leon Draisaitl had a goal and three assists, Kailer Yamamoto scored twice and host Edmonton won without captain Connor McDavid in the lineup.

Riley Sheahan and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins also scored for the Oilers (30-20-6), who will be without McDavid for two to three weeks because of a left quadriceps injury.

NHL/NBA

Blues' Bouwmeester has cardiac incident, teams postpone game

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — St. Louis defenseman Jay Bouwmeester was hospitalized and undergoing tests early Wednesday after suffering a cardiac episode and collapsing on the bench during the first period of the Blues' game against the Ducks.

The team said in a statement late Tuesday night that the 36-year-old Bouwmeester was conscious and alert. Blues general manager Doug Armstrong said Bouwmeester was awake, alert and moving his arms and legs as he was transported from the arena.

The teams postponed the rest of Tuesday's game, to be made up at a later date.

The Blues were supposed to fly to Las Vegas, where they are scheduled to play Thursday, but remained in Southern California overnight.

"Thankfully, with the quick response of our medical trainers, Anaheim medical trainers and their team physicians, they were able to stabilize Jay," Armstrong said.

The hockey community sent tweets of support as word of the episode spread throughout the NHL.

Washington Capitals forward and former teammate T.J. Oshie wrote "Praying for Bo!" while teams around the league sent out best wishes.

Teammates Vince Dunn and Alex Pietrangolo immediately called for help after Bouwmeester slumped over with 7:50 left in the first period. After a couple of minutes, Bouwmeester was taken out on a stretcher through a tunnel next to the Blues bench and transported to an Orange County hospital.

Bouwmeester appeared to be grabbing a drink of water when

he began to slowly fall. Emergency medical personnel rushed to the Blues bench. Bouwmeester was skating in his 57th game this season and the 1,241st of his NHL career. He skated 1:20 in his last shift before collapsing and logged 5:34 of ice time in the game.

St. Louis' radio announcer Chris Kerber said during an interview with the team's flagship station that a defibrillator was used.

Bouwmeester's father was at the game as part of the team's annual Dads Trip. He went with his son to the hospital while teammates and their fathers remained at the arena awaiting updates.

Ducks and Blues players gathered to see what was wrong before Bouwmeester was taken away. The teams then went to their dressing rooms, and the game was called off a few minutes later tied at 1.

Players from both teams met for hugs and well-wishes after changing out of their gear.

The last player to collapse on an NHL bench was Dallas forward Rich Peverley in 2014. Peverley had an irregular heartbeat, and the quick response of emergency officials made sure he was OK.

The NHL has pages of emergency medical standards that spell out in specific detail that at least two doctors must be in attendance for every game and one must be within 50 feet of the bench. A defibrillator, which was used when Detroit's Jiri Fischer collapsed in 2005, must be available, along with a triage room and ambulances.

Bouwmeester is in his 17th NHL season and has for that time been known for his strong skating and conditioning. He helped the Blues win the Stanley Cup last season and won an Olympic gold medal with Canada in 2014.

AP Hockey Writer Stephen Whyno contributed.



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

St. Louis Blues defenseman Vince Dunn, center, wipes his face as Anaheim Ducks defenseman Josh Manson kneels on the ice while Blues defenseman Jay Bouwmeester, who suffered a cardiac incident, is worked on by medical personnel during a game Tuesday.



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Houston Rockets guard James Harden, right, drives past Boston Celtics guard Kemba Walker. Harden had 42 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to lead his team to a 116-105 win Tuesday in Houston.

NBA roundup

Rockets end Celtics' streak as Harden scores 42 points

Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden scored 42 points, Russell Westbrook had 36 and the Houston Rockets snapped Boston's seven-game win streak with a 116-105 victory over the Celtics on Tuesday night.

Houston broke it open with a 15-2 run that made it 116-98 with about two minutes left. Harden scored six points during the decisive stretch, and Daniel House had five.

Boston had two turnovers and missed numerous shots to allow the Rockets to turn the close game into a one where coach Mike D'Antoni cleared the bench for the last minute with the game well in hand.

Harden had eight rebounds and seven assists, and Westbrook finished with 10 rebounds and five assists.

"Harden was great ... and Westbrook was great," Boston coach Brad Stevens said. "Those guys are two of the best in the world and they showed it again tonight." Gordon Hayward had 20 points in the Celtics' first loss since Jan. 26.

76ers 110, Clippers 103: Ben Simmons had 26 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, pushing the host Sixers to the win.

Joel Embiid also scored 26 points and Tobias Harris added 17 points and 12 boards for Philadelphia, which has the NBA's best home record at 25-2. Josh Richardson scored 17 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter.

Kawhi Leonard led Los Angeles with 30 points, and reserve Landry Shamet scored 19 against his former team.

Richardson nailed his third three-pointer of the quarter to

give the Sixers a 102-94 lead with 4:44 left. Then he scored on a driving left-handed layup and made the free throw to complete the three-point play, extending the lead to 11.

Pelicans 138, Trail Blazers 117: Zion Williamson scored a season-high 31 points, powering host New Orleans to the victory.

Playing 28 minutes in just his ninth NBA game, Williamson used his 6-foot-6, 285-pound frame, quick feet and explosive vertical to have his way with every defender Portland tried against him.

JJ Redick scored 20 and Josh Hart had 17 points for the Pelicans, who trailed by as many as 16 in the first quarter before taking command en route to a third straight victory.

Trail Blazers star Damian Lillard scored 20 points — less than half of his 42-point average in his previous 10 games.

Wizards 126, Bulls 114: Bradley Beal scored 30 points, and West Washington held off Zach LaVine and Chicago for the victory.

Rui Hachimura added 20 points for the Wizards, who won for the fourth time in six games.

LaVine scored 19 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter as the Bulls whittled an 18-point deficit down to six points.

Spurs 114, Thunder 106: LaMarcus Aldridge had 25 points and 14 rebounds, and San Antonio won at Oklahoma City to stop a five-game slide.

Dejounte Murray also scored 25 points for the Spurs, who had dropped eight of 10 overall. Patty Mills had 20 points, and fellow reserve Derrick White finished with 17. Led by Aldridge and Murray, San Antonio made 25 of 27 foul shots.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	40	14	.741	—
Boston	37	16	.698	2½
Philadelphia	34	21	.618	6½
Brooklyn	29	26	.528	15
New York	17	37	.315	23

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	35	18	.660	—
Orlando	23	31	.426	12½
Washington	18	33	.355	19½
Charlotte	17	36	.321	18
Atlanta	15	40	.273	21

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	46	7	.868	—
Indiana	31	23	.574	15½
Chicago	19	36	.345	28
Detroit	19	37	.339	28½
Cleveland	13	40	.245	33

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	34	20	.630	—
Dallas	32	22	.593	2
Memphis	27	26	.509	6½
San Antonio	23	31	.426	11
New Orleans	23	31	.426	11

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	38	15	.704	—
Utah	35	18	.660	2½
Oklahoma City	32	22	.593	6
Portland	25	30	.455	13½
Minnesota	19	37	.339	28

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	40	12	.769	—
Clippers	37	17	.685	4
Sacramento	21	32	.396	19½
Phoenix	21	38	.350	20
Golden State	12	42	.222	29

Monday's games

Orlando 135, Atlanta 125	Brooklyn 106, Indiana 105
Charlotte 87, Detroit 126	Toronto 137, Minnesota 126
Milwaukee 123, Sacramento 111	Utah 123, Dallas 119
Denver 127, San Antonio 120	Miami 113, Golden State 101
Houston 116, Boston 105	L.A. Lakers 125, Phoenix 100

Tuesday's games

Washington 126, Chicago 114	Philadelphia 110, L.A. Clippers 103
New Orleans 138, Portland 117	San Antonio 114, Oklahoma City 106
Houston 116, Boston 105	L.A. Lakers 125, Phoenix 100
Atlanta at Cleveland	Detroit at Brooklyn
Milwaukee at Indiana	Charlotte at Minnesota
Washington at New York	Portland at Memphis
Sacramento at Dallas	Golden State at Phoenix
Miami at Utah	L.A. Lakers at Denver

COLLEGE BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

Unbeaten Aztecs win Mountain West title

San Diego State improves to 25-0 with its walloping of New Mexico

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego State Aztecs won the Mountain West Conference championship, were showered with confetti, cut down a net at Viejas Arena, doused coach Brian Dutcher with Gatorade and then reset their goals.

Just keep winning.

Junior forward Matt Mitchell had 22 points and 12 rebounds for his first career double-double and scored his 1,000th point for No. 4 San Diego State, which beat New Mexico 82-59 Tuesday night to win the MWC title and remain the nation's only undefeated team at 25-0.

"The hardest thing in basketball, obviously other than winning a Final Four, is winning a regular-season conference title, because you have to do it over the whole season," Dutcher said. "To have the title outright already with four games to play is an incredible accomplishment."

"I told them in the locker room, now we have to get greedy," said Dutcher, who has won a Final Four, as Steve Fisher's assistant at Michigan in 1989. "We've got to try to win them all. It won't be easy. ... Four really hard games to go, but now that we have the title, we have to have another goal, and that goal has to be to have a perfect season. That will be the next step, to try to finish with a perfect season."

Yanni Wetzell added 20 points and nine rebounds for the Aztecs (25-0, 14-0 MWC), who clinched at least a share of the title in the first half when Utah State beat Colorado State, then won it outright with a suffocating defense that held New Mexico (17-9 6-7) to 26 points in the second half.

Malachi Flynn had 15 points and Jordan Schakel scored 11 for SDSU.

Mitchell, a junior forward from Riverdale, scored his 1,000th career point on a bank shot early in the second half. That was part of a 9-2 run that expanded SDSU's 35-33 halftime lead to 44-35. Mitchell also made a layup on a nice spin move, Flynn hit a jumper and Schakel a three-pointer.

"We definitely went into the locker and as a team told each other we needed to pick it up and be better," Mitchell said. "We came out in the second half and I think we definitely wanted this tonight and we wanted to win this on our home court and we came out and showed that in the second half."

It was a big night for Mitchell. He said surpassing 1,000 points was "special to me because I was able to not only reach 1,000, but reach it on a night we hang a banner and win the conference. I definitely will cherish tonight, but tomorrow I have to let it go and move on to the next four games we have."

By the numbers

1,000

San Diego State junior forward Matt Mitchell had 22 points to reach 1,000 points for his career, surpassing Kawhi Leonard for the school's all-time scoring record.

.387

Three-point shooting percentage for the Aztecs, tops in the Mountain West Conference.

17.6

Average number of points by which San Diego State has outscored opponents this season, behind only Gonzaga's margin of 21.6.

SOURCE: Associated Press, NCAA.com

No. 6 Dayton 81, Rhode Island 67:

Obi Toppin scored 22 points and led an opening 17-point spurt as the host Flyers dominated a matchup of the Toppin brothers and the Atlantic 10's top teams. The teams brought double-digit winning streaks into a chippy game that included seven technical fouls. Dayton (22-2, 11-0) got the better of it in every way, winning 13th in a row.

Obi Toppin had a double-double with 10 rebounds. Jalen Crutcher scored 21 points, and Trey Landers matched his career high with 14 rebounds.

Fatts Russell had 19 points for the Rams (18-6, 10-2), who had a 10-game winning streak snapped. Freshman Jacob Toppin had four points.

No. 9 Maryland 72, Nebraska 70:

Jalen Smith had 16 points and 13 rebounds, Eric Ayala scored 16 points and the host Terrapins extended their winning streak to seven games and remain alone atop the Big Ten.

After Maryland (20-4, 10-3) let a 14-point lead dwindle to 71-70, Smith blocked a shot and made a free throw on the other end to clinch it.

Donta Scott had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Terps, and Anthony Cowan Jr. totaled 13



DENIS POROBY/AP

San Diego State forward Matt Mitchell, right, dunks over New Mexico guard Keith McGee. Mitchell had 22 points and 12 rebounds in the No. 4 Aztecs' 82-59 defeat of New Mexico on Tuesday in San Diego.

points and 10 assists. It was the first time since 2001 that three Maryland players registered double-doubles in the same game.

Haanif Cheatham scored 20 and Thorir Thorbjarnarson added 15 for the Huskers (7-17, 2-11), who have lost nine straight and are 0-9 on the road.

No. 12 Kentucky 78, Vanderbilt 64: Tyrese Maxey scored 25 points and the visiting Wildcats rallied for their biggest half-time deficit of the season.

Kentucky (19-5, 9-2) kept a piece of the lead atop the Southeastern Conference standings with Auburn and LSU. The Wildcats also won their eighth straight over the Commodores, though this was the fifth time in this streak that they've had to rally from a double-digit deficit. This time, they trailed by 14 during the first half and were down 36-27 at halftime.

Vanderbilt (9-15, 1-10) was looking to make Kentucky the second straight ranked team to come into Memorial Gym and lose within

the past week after the Commodores upset then-No. 18 LSU.

No. 13 Penn State 89, Purdue 76: Mike Watkins matched his season high with 19 points and Seth Lundy added a career-high 18 to lift the visiting Nittany Lions.

Penn State (19-5, 9-4 Big Ten) made a season-high 14 three-pointers for its seventh consecutive victory that also snapped a nine-game losing streak in the series. It was the Nittany Lions' first win at Mackey Arena since Feb. 18, 2006.

Trevion Williams finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Boilermakers (14-11, 7-7), who had their three-game winning streak end.

Michigan State 70, No. 22 Illinois 69: All-Star guard Ayo Dosunmu crumbled to the floor clutching his left knee as the Spartans' Xavier Tillman threw down a huge dunk at the buzzer to lift his team to a road win.

The severity of Dosunmu's injury wasn't immediately made

available. The Illini's leading scorer had 17 points Tuesday and is averaging 15.8 per game.

Rocker Watts led Michigan State (17-8, 9-5 Big Ten) with 21 points, and Tillman had 17. Aaron Henry and Cassius Winston added 13 and 12, respectively.

Andres Feliz scored 15 points and Kofi Cockburn added 11 for Illinois (16-8, 8-5).

No. 25 LSU 82, Missouri 78: Darius Days scored seven of his 20 points in the final five minutes as host LSU rallied to beat Missouri.

LSU (18-6, 9-2 Southeastern Conference) trailed by eight points midway through the second half before taking the lead for good at 72-69 on Days' three-pointer with 4:43 remaining. Missouri (11-13, 3-8) stayed close over the final minutes.

Boise State 74, Air Force 57: Justinian Jessup scored 18 points, including his team's first four-point play of the season, and Boise State won its 11th consecutive home game.

NFL/AUTO RACING/COLLEGE



JOSHUA GUNTER, CLEVELAND.COM/AP

Browns defensive end Myles Garrett, right, hits Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph with a helmet during a game on Nov. 14, 2019. Garrett was suspended indefinitely after the incident, but he was reinstated by the league on Wednesday.

Browns' Garrett reinstated by NFL

By Tom Withers
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Myles Garrett is allowed to play and chase quarterbacks again after the NFL reinstated the Browns' star defensive end from his indefinite suspension for a vicious attack on Pittsburgh QB Mason Rudolph last season.

The league lifted its ban Wednesday on Garrett, who ripped off Rudolph's helmet and smashed him over the head with it during a Nov. 14 game on national television. Garrett missed Cleveland's final six games and his loss was a major blow to the Browns, who went 2-4 without him, finished 6-10, fired coach Freddie Kitchens and saw general manager John Dorsey resign.

On Monday, Garrett met with Commissioner Roger Goodell and other league officials in the final step before he was cleared to return. He can participate in all of the Browns' offseason activities and that's a big relief as the team is undergoing another new start under coach Kevin Stefanski.

Garrett is cleared to return to all activities with the Browns.

"We welcome Myles back to our organization with open arms," Browns vice president of football operations and GM Andrew Berry said. "We know he is grateful to be reinstated, eager to put the past behind him and continue to evolve and grow as a leader. We look forward to having his strong positive presence back as a teammate, player and person in our community."

Garrett did not release a statement, but he posted a meme on

his Twitter account of a scene from the film "John Wick" with the subtitle: "But now yeah, I'M THINKING I'M BACK!!!"

Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield offered his support, tweeting: "welcome back big fella!!!"

As the Browns were wrapping up a rare win over the Steelers in a Thursday night matchup, Garrett, the No. 1 overall draft pick in 2017, pulled down Rudolph after a pass attempt and the two wrestled on the ground. Rudolph tried to pull off Garrett's helmet but couldn't. Garrett ripped off Rudolph's helmet and swung and struck him with it, triggering a brawl between the teams.

Garrett paid dearly for his misstep. He was fined \$45,623 and lost \$1.14 million in game checks. His reputation also took a shot and he'll have to watch his behavior going forward as another violent incident could result in even harsher discipline by the league.

Garrett's suspension is the longest for a single game incident in league history. Tennessee's Albert Haynesworth was suspended five games for stomping on a player's helmet-less head in 2006.

Garrett appealed his ban and told independent officer James Thrash during his hearing that Rudolph had used a slur during their skirmish. However, Thrash upheld the decision and Garrett was done for the season. The league also suspended Steelers guard Maurice Pouncey for three games (the penalty was later reduced to two) for punching and kicking Garrett, and Browns defensive lineman Larry Ogunjobi was suspended one game.

F1 cancels Chinese GP

Race was to be in April; organizers unsure if it will be rescheduled

By Rob Harris
Associated Press

LONDON — Formula One organizers on Wednesday postponed the Chinese Grand Prix that was due to be staged in Shanghai in April, the latest sporting event impacted by the fast-spreading viral infection in the country.

More than 1,100 people have been killed in China by the virus, which has been named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization.

One of 22 races on the F1 calendar for 2020, the Chinese Grand Prix was due to be staged on April 19.

The decision to postpone the race was taken after a request

from the Shanghai promoter to "ensure the health and safety of the travelling staff, championship participants and fans," F1 said in a statement.

Motor sport officials from F1's governing body, the FIA, Chinese organizers and teams will remain in discussions about whether the race can be rearranged this year.

"All parties will take the appropriate amount of time to study the viability of potential alternative dates for the grand prix later in the year should the situation improve," F1 said.

Other virus-enforced cancellations or postponements range from soccer and Olympic qualifying events to golf tournaments.

The LPGA canceled the Honda

LPGA Thailand, scheduled for Feb. 20-23, and the HSBC Singapore's World Championship in Singapore, the following week.

It previously lost the Blue Bay LPGA on Hainan Island in China.

The Tokyo Olympics open on July 24 and organizers have repeatedly said the Games will not be canceled or postponed. But many Olympic qualifying events are in disarray, with Chinese athletes not free to travel outside the country to participate.

The Chinese women's soccer team was quarantined in their hotel for almost two weeks after arriving in Australia for the Asian qualifying tournament for the Olympics.

NCAA presses Senate for 'guardrails' on athlete pay

By Ben Nuckols
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — NCAA President Mark Emmert urged Congress to put restrictions on college athletes' ability to earn money from endorsements, telling a Senate committee Tuesday federal action is needed to "maintain uniform standards in college sports" amid player-friendly laws approved in California and under consideration in other states.

The NCAA last fall said it would allow players to "benefit" from the use of their name, image and likeness and is working on new rules to put in place in April. Under the NCAA's timeline, athletes would be able to take advantage of endorsement opportunities beginning next January.

Meanwhile, more than 25 states are considering legislation that would force the NCAA to allow players to earn money off their personal brand in a bid to address inequities in the multibillion-dollar college sports industry. California passed a law last year that gives broad endorsement rights to players and it will take effect in 2023. Other states could grant those rights as soon as this year.

The NCAA's concern, echoed by Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby, who also testified Tuesday, is that endorsement deals for athletes would have a negative effect on recruiting, with schools and boosters in states with athlete-friendly laws using money to entice players.

"If implemented, these laws would give some schools an unfair recruiting advantage and open the door to sponsorship arrangements being used as a recruiting inducement. This would create a huge imbalance among schools and could lead to corruption in the recruiting process," Emmert said. "We may need Congress' support in helping maintain uniform standards in college sports."

Emmert's comments were similar to what the NCAA, the Big 12 and the Atlantic Coast Conference have been communicating to Congress through well-paid lobbyists. The Associated Press has found that the NCAA and the two conferences spent \$750,000 last year lobbying on Capitol Hill, in part to amplify their concern that "guardrails" are needed on endorsement pay for athletes to avoid destroying college sports as we know it.

Sen. Jerry Moran, a Kansas Republican and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection, said he was not inclined to act until after the NCAA reveals its new rules.

"I wish Congress was in a position to be able to provide the NCAA and the athletes the opportunity to find a solution. ... The ability for Congress to do that is, that's a challenge," Moran said in an interview after the hearing. "The next step is to see what the NCAA is capable of presenting to us in April."

NCAA critics believe there is plenty of evidence that recruiting is already corrupt — pointing in part to the federal criminal case involving shoe companies paying basketball players to attend schools they sponsor — and that letting players earn endorsement money won't create the major problems the NCAA predicts.

Ranogai Huma, executive director of the National College Players' Association, which advocates for athletes' rights, said under current NCAA rules, 99.3% of top-100 football recruits choose teams from the Power Five conferences.

"The power conferences have advantages and they consistently pull the best recruits," Huma said. "The reality is, you're not going to change the recruiting by limiting the players' opportunities."

Huma said once states start granting players endorsement rights, Congress would not be inclined to take those rights away, and "we'll have an opportunity to witness the fact that NCAA sports will still be strong and everybody will tune in."

There was bipartisan agreement among the senators at the hearing that athletes should have access to endorsement opportunities and that some regulations are necessary.

Emmert did not fully escape lawmakers' anger at the system he presides over.

Sen. Marsha Blackburn, a Tennessee Republican, excoriated Emmert for the NCAA's handling of sexual violence against women. She also noted the case of James Wiseman, a top NBA prospect who left school after he was suspended over \$11,500 given to his mother by Memphis coach Penny Hardaway to help with moving expenses. Hardaway gave the money before he was Memphis' coach.

Blackburn said the NCAA's lack of consistency and transparency in the Wiseman case had eroded trust in the organization's ability to handle issues of player benefits.

"I think a question that must be going through a lot of minds of student-athletes and their parents is, how in the world are they going to be able to trust you to get this right?" Blackburn said.

MLB

Turn: Scandal took out 10 percent of managers

FROM BACK PAGE

he went public in an interview with *The Athletic*. He took down 10% of major league managers and became for some an MVP — Most Virtuous Player.

Houston manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for the season by Major League Baseball on Jan. 13, and the pair were fired by the Astros later that day. Manfred's conclusions led to the departures of Boston manager Alex Cora, the Astros' bench coach in 2017, and new New York Mets manager Carlos Beltran, Houston's senior player during the title run.

A third of the teams changed managers, including the Mets twice. Milwaukee's Craig Counsell, hired in May 2015, already is the National League's senior skipper. New faces include Dusty Baker (Astros), Joe Girardi (Phillies), Gabe Kapler (Giants), Joe Maddon (Angels), Mike Matheny (Royals), Luis Rojas (Mets), David Ross (Cubs), Derek Shelton (Pirates), Jayce Tingler (Padres) and Ron Roenicke (Red Sox).

Baker, at 70 the oldest big league manager, is tasked with keeping the Astros on track to become the first team to win 100 or more games in four straight seasons. He also will try to steady a core branded as villains by players and fans in other cities.

"You got to go forward and make sure that it doesn't happen again," Baker said. "It certainly is not going to happen on my watch here, and I don't foresee it happening ever again because this has been an embarrassment for a lot of people."

Cora's punishment was delayed by Manfred pending MLB's investigation into the Red Sox, which could conclude this week. Boston's turmoil extended to the trade market, with a deal that would send former MVP Mookie Betts and former Cy Young Award winner David Price to the Los Angeles Dodgers as part of a three-team trade involving Minnesota. The delay in the deal being finalized prompted

criticism from the players' association, still smarting over the grievance loss of Chicago Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant, who unsuccessfully claimed the team violated the labor contract by delaying his big league debut until the day his free-agent eligibility would be delayed a year.

Bryant's trade value increased with arbitrator Mark Irvin's decision, because acquiring teams can be certain he cannot go free for two more seasons. The cost of top free agents was never more vivid than this offseason.

Players who switched teams included pitcher Gerrit Cole (\$324 million from the Yankees), third baseman Anthony Rendon (\$245 million from the Angels), right-hander Zack Wheeler (\$118 million from the Phillies), third baseman Josh Donaldson (\$92 million from the Twins) and left-hander Madison Bumgarner (\$85 million from the Diamondbacks).

Right-hander Stephen Strasburg became a free agent shortly after winning the World Series MVP award, then stayed with the Nationals for \$245 million.

On the December day he signed with the Yankees, Cole teamed with pioneering player Curt Flood, former union head Marvin Miller and others who fought to gain free agency and then to preserve it.

"It's so important that players know the other sacrifices that players made in order to keep the integrity of the game where it is," Cole said.

All those big bucks and pre-Christmas deals contrasted with the slow markets of the prior two offseasons. Spending followed MLB's fourth straight attendance drop, to 68.5 million, down from 73.8 million in 2015.

"It's a more competitive environment. More teams are trying to win," New York Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen said.

Washington will raise the championship flag for the first time in franchise history and will try to become the first repeat winner since the Yankees from 1998-2000.



PHOTOS BY JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Ron Roenicke, right, speaks as Red Sox Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom looks on after being after Roenicke was named interim manager on Tuesday, in Fort Myers, Fla. Roenicke takes over for Alex Cora.

Red Sox give Roenicke interim manager's tag

'Permanency' put on hold

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — It took Ron Roenicke almost five years to get another chance as a major league manager.

He'll need to wait at least until next week for "permanency."

The Red Sox made Roenicke their interim manager Tuesday, promoting the former Brewers skipper to replace Alex Cora on the day Boston's pitchers and catchers reported for the start of spring training.

Although there is no expiration date on Roenicke's tenure, the interim tag will stay until Major League Baseball completes its investigation into whether the Red Sox engaged in illegal sign-stealing during their 2018 World Series championship season. If the probe clears Roenicke, who has denied being part of any rules violations, he is expected to stay.

"We felt that naming Ron our interim manager was the best way to respect the investigation that's ongoing into our 2018 club. But we feel very strongly about Ron's ability to lead this group and how well-suited he is for this task," Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom said in a news conference on the eve of the team's first formal workout.

"We have no reason to think that there is anything that would cause an adverse result for Ron in this investigation," Bloom said. "We're going to respect the ongoing investigation and we'll address permanency once it's complete."

Just one year after winning the World Series in his first season in Boston, Cora was let go when Commissioner Rob Manfred named him as a ring-leader behind the Astros' 2017 illegal sign-stealing. The Red Sox have maintained that there was no similar scheme after Cora took over in Boston the next year.

Manfred said last week that he hoped to have the Red Sox investigation completed before the start of spring training. But a person with knowledge of the probe said Tuesday the investigation will continue at least into next week. The person spoke on the con-



Catcher Christian Vazquez was among the Red Sox pitchers and catchers who reported for spring training Tuesday in Fort Myers, Fla.

dition of anonymity because there was no formal announcement.

Red Sox pitchers and catchers reported Tuesday and had their first workout Wednesday. Rather than open spring training without a manager, the team gave the job to Roenicke — for now.

Roenicke, 63, takes over a team that is dealing with the fallout not only from the cheating investigation but also the salary dump of onetime AL MVP Mookie Betts and 2012 Cy Young winner David Price.

After winning a franchise-record 108 regular-season games and the World Series in 2018, the Red Sox missed the playoffs for the first time since 2015.

"We're very disappointed — as all these players are — in what happened last year," Roenicke said. "And our focus is to try to get back in the playoffs, and seeing what happens after that."

Roenicke spent five years as the Brewers manager from 2010-15, winning 96 games and the NL Central title in his first season and finishing as runner-up for NL manager of the year. In all, he led Milwaukee to a 342-331 record in five seasons.



MARK LEMMON/AP

New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone, left, smiles as Gerrit Cole tries on a Yankee jersey as he is introduced on Dec. 18 in New York. The pitcher left the Astros for a 9-year \$324 million contract.

MLB

Gonzalez 'remorseful' for sign stealing

Becomes first batter from 2017 Astros team to publicly apologize

Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Marwin Gonzalez became the first batter from the 2017 Houston Astros team that won the World Series to publicly apologize for his role in the sign-stealing scandal, expressing regret Tuesday after reporting to spring training with the Minnesota Twins.

"I'm remorseful for everything that happened in 2017, for everything that we did as a group, and for the players that were affected directly by us by doing this and some other things," Gonzalez said. He later added: "I wish that we could take it back, but there's nothing we can do now."

Major League Baseball's investigation into the allegation first made publicly by former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers resulted in one-season suspensions for manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow, a \$5 million fine and the loss of Houston's first- and second-round draft picks in 2020 and 2021. Hinch and Luhnow were fired by the Astros, and Boston manager Alex Cora and New York Mets manager Carlos Beltran also lost their jobs for their involvement in the sign-stealing system for the Astros. Cora was bench coach and Beltran was a player on the 2017 team.

Former Astros pitcher Charlie Morton, now with the Tampa Bay Rays, said Saturday he regretted

DID YOU KNOW?

Minnesota Twins utility player Marwin Gonzalez had a career year in 2017, when he was a career year of the Houston Astros team that won the World Series but was later discovered to have used electronic means to steal catchers' signs. Gonzalez hit .303 with 23 home runs and 90 RBIs in 134 games, with an OPS (.907) that was 148 points better than any other season of his eight-year career.

SOURCE: Associated Press

not making an effort to stop the sign-stealing at the time. The current Astros have mostly avoided commenting since the results were released from MLB's probe into the elaborate method they used to try to tip off teammates as to what type of pitch was coming.

Gonzalez, a multi-positional player starting his second season of a \$21 million, two-year contract with the Twins, had a career year in 2017 with the Astros. He hit .303 with 23 home runs and 90 RBIs in 134 games, with an OPS (.907) that was 148 points better than any other season of his eight-year career.

"I can't control how people think of me. I can control how hard I work, and that's the way that I prepare for this season," Gonzalez said at Minnesota's training facility in Fort Myers,



TONY DEAN/AP

The Houston Astros' Marwin Gonzalez throws his bat after striking out against Cleveland Indians starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco during the fifth inning of a game in Cleveland on May 26, 2018.

Fla. As for whether the Astros would have won the title without the assistance of the sign-stealing system, featuring outfield video cameras and trash can banging? "You're never going to know. That was a great team. Great guys, too. Beside everything that happened, I know for a fact that they're great guys, but it's hard to

answer that question," Gonzalez said.

The Twins have two new pitchers, Rich Hill and Kenta Maeda, who were on the Los Angeles Dodgers team that lost to the Astros in the 2017 World Series. Gonzalez said he planned to speak to them but downplayed the lasting effect of his connection to the scandal.

"I'm sure we're going to have a great relationship," Gonzalez said.

The players still with the Astros will have a harder time escaping the backlash around baseball.

"They're going to get booed. Hopefully they can get through that," Gonzalez said. "I know they have a great team, too, and I hope to face them in the playoffs."

Maddon intrigued by Ohtani, focused on future

By GREG BEACHAM

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Three days after Joe Maddon's 66th birthday, the Los Angeles Angels' new manager sat down in a familiar spring training complex and reminded everybody he was into two-way players before they were cool.

Left-hander Deshawn Warren was the Angels' second-round pick in 1992, when Maddon was a roving minor league instructor for the organization that employed him for his first three decades in baseball. Although Warren never got out of the low minors as a pitcher, he was maybe the fastest runner in the organization.

Maddon unsuccessfully tried to persuade Angels general manager Dan O'Brien to let Warren play in the field at a time when serious two-way play had been abandoned for decades. Now that Shohei Ohtani has emphatically brought it back, Maddon is thrilled to be on the vanguard again.

"I've always been intrigued by that," Maddon said. "I've always thought it's something that should



JEFF GRETCHEN, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/AP

Manager Joe Maddon returns to the organization where he worked for the first three decades of his career, taking over a team that has the pieces in place to contend for a playoff berth.

be looked into more deeply."

Maddon has prided himself on being willing to be an innovator and an unconventional thinker for his entire career. He isn't narrowing his mind as he heads into

the first season of his homecoming with the Angels.

Ohtani's unique progress is among Maddon's most important concerns over the next six weeks in Arizona, along with the evolu-

tion of a starting rotation that will hopefully include Ohtani before Memorial Day.

The Angels are targeting mid-May for Ohtani's return to the big-league mound, general manager Billy Eppler revealed Tuesday while pitchers and catchers reported to Tempe Diablo Stadium. Ohtani will be available as a designated hitter on opening day, but he will take days away from the big-league team to make rehab pitching starts in the minors.

Eppler and Ohtani have detailed plans for the two-way star's final comeback from Tommy John surgery and subsequent offseason knee surgery, which pushed back his pitching progress. Maddon is on board with the plans, but he also intends to make decisions by speaking face-to-face with Ohtani.

"I think patience is a key word with all of this," Maddon said. "I've been in development my whole life, so when you're trying to develop a major league talent like him here, coming off the injury situations that he's had, it's important to be very patient, and I am."

Angels owner Arte Moreno's patience has clearly worn a bit thin after four consecutive losing seasons and a decade without a playoff victory.

Right after Maddon and the Cubs parted ways in September, Moreno abruptly fired manager Brad Ausmus and eagerly pursued Maddon to return to the club where he won the first of his two World Series rings as Mike Scioscia's bench coach.

Maddon took the job, but he isn't here to ease into retirement. He isn't even the oldest manager in the game anymore with 70-year-old Dusty Baker's arrival in Houston.

Maddon is living in the moment and planning for the future. But his return to the Angels has still brought on waves of memories, both here in Tempe and back in Southern California, where he and his wife will settle back into the house they left behind in Long Beach.

Maddon plans to use spring training as a chance to find a balance between the past and the present so he can focus on the Angels' future.

SPORTS



Two players arrested
Riep, Wint accused of rape,
kidnapping » **College football, Page 17**

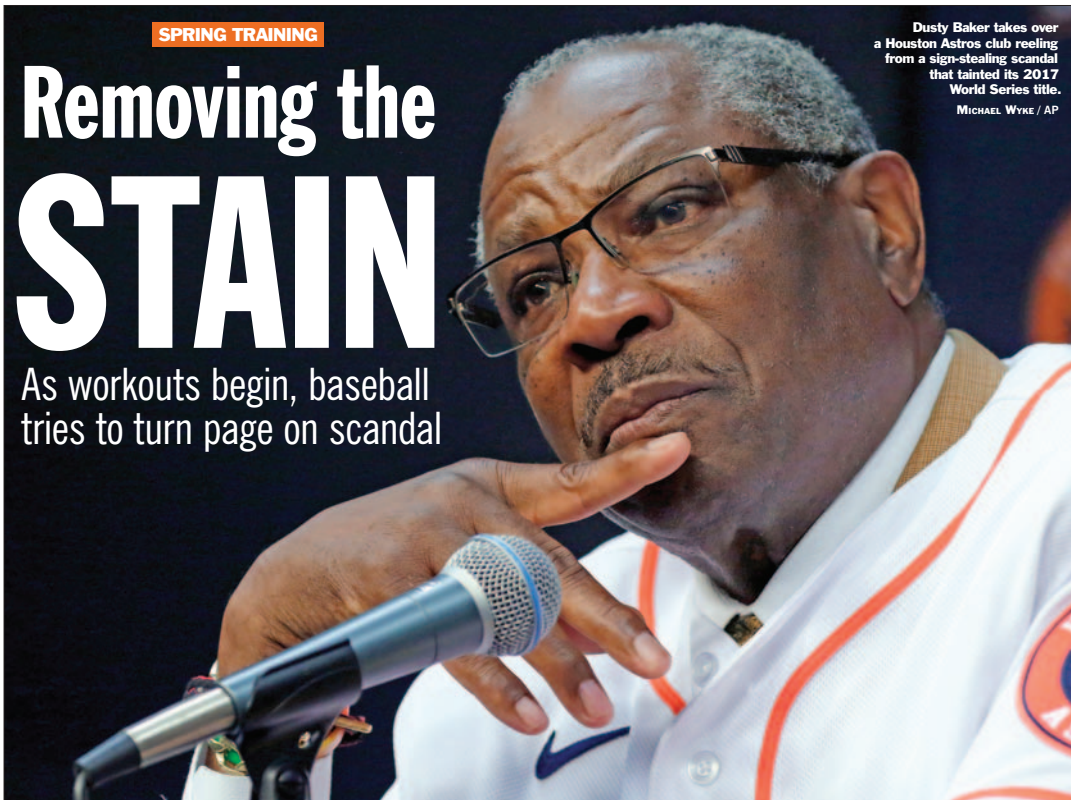
SPRING TRAINING

Removing the STAIN

As workouts begin, baseball tries to turn page on scandal

Dusty Baker takes over
a Houston Astros club reeling
from a sign-stealing scandal
that tainted its 2017
World Series title.

MICHAEL WYKE / AP



By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

Baseball returns to the field this week when pitchers, catchers and cheaters report to spring training.

Fans await the annual sunny scenes of favorites stretching on bright green grass in Florida and Arizona.

This year the players bring along dark clouds of scandal — the 2017 World Series champion Houston Astros have been tainted by their sign-stealing scam and the 2018 champion Boston Red Sox have been accused of similar subversion.

Teams hope once workouts start, the stain will fade.

“I think those story lines will weave in and out, but that spring training is that juncture for individual fan bases to be optimistic about what the sea-

son ahead holds and it shifts back to that,” Toronto Blue Jays President Mark Shapiro said. “There’s a natural kind of rhythm to spring training that diverts to the positive stories.”

But first, confessions?

Some regard baseball’s blemish from sign stealing as vivid as the acne on the backs of steroids-swelled sluggers of the 1990s and early 2000s.

None of the current members of the Astros have publicly expressed contrition for breaking prohibitions against using a video camera to swipe signs from opposing catchers in 2017 and 2018. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said spring training might be the appropriate time for a group mea culpa because fessing up individually during the offseason “could be sort of a treacherous road to go down.”

Former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers, now with Oakland, sparked the scandal in November when

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BEN MARGOT/AP

Astros pitcher Mike Fiers, who pitched for the Astros in 2017, blew the whistle about sign stealing in a story in *The Athletic*.



Cora



Beltran

San Diego State clinches Mountain West
College basketball, Page 20

Blues' Bouwmeester collapses on bench
NHL, Page 19



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